



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER OHIO.

209 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309

Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986

Toll Free: 888-757-1904 • www.ccao.org

Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

Ohio House Finance Committee
House Bill 687 – Written Proponent Testimony
May 31, 2022

Debbie Lieberman
CCAO President & Montgomery County Commissioner

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony in support of House Bill 687.

I would like to specifically thank the committee for the inclusion of \$50 million in HB 687 for county jail capital projects. In my conversations with fellow county commissioners, I can assure you that these funds are badly needed across Ohio counties and will be put to effective use serving our communities.

County jails are facing growing and evolving challenges. Today, county jails are being asked to fulfill roles they were not originally designed to serve. Rising inmate populations, especially those inmates with mental health and addiction-related needs, pose significant challenges for our aging jail facilities. Likewise, growing female inmate populations create additional strain on jail infrastructure. Aging county jails require updates to meet these needs.

Making the necessary capital investments into jail facilities is a challenge that many counties cannot shoulder independently. Constructing a new jail is a massive capital expense that often costs tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars depending upon the county's size and needs. This often outstrips available county resources, leaving counties with few workable options. A partnership is crucial to make these necessary jail updates financially viable.

The \$50 million proposed in HB 687 marks the second consecutive capital appropriations bill in recent years containing state support for county jails and reflects past practice of the state. CCAO is deeply grateful for this investment in the state-county partnership and for the many public safety benefits it will convey to counties across the state.

I thank the committee for their support of county government and for providing critical resources to address one of counties' most pressing challenges.

