



## SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – Proponent Testimony, HB 8, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Ohio Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity (AFP). As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the country, AFP is driving long-term solutions to some of the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its thousands of activists across Ohio, are dedicated to breaking barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing or reducing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and by transforming their communities. Accordingly, I urge you to support and favorably report House Bill 8.

There are multiple aspects and policy areas contained within AFP's overall criminal justice reform efforts, many of which are complex, but my organization also stands behind commonsense, straightforward fixes like HB 8. With few exceptions, the bill will require interrogations of suspects being held in places of confinement to be recorded by either audio or audiovisual means. As Representatives West and Plummer pointed out during their sponsor testimony, adopting this practice will afford added layers of protection to everyone involved in the process, and will ensure that those standing accused of a crime have a much more substantive record of interactions with law enforcement.

Audio and audiovisual recordings of interrogations are important because they can convey a much greater level of detail and nuance than a simple transcript can, and also can provide a greater depth of understanding to judges, prosecutors, and juries as a criminal case proceeds. The simple changes to the Ohio Revised Code outlined in HB 8 will decrease the risk of wrongful conviction, enhance the protection of rights for people standing accused of criminal acts, and also protect law enforcement officials by creating a clearer record of what can oftentimes be

emotionally charged, stressful situations, wherein even the most diligent professionals can commit simple human error.

A version of this bill passed the full House and Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously during the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, but simply ran out of time to receive final consideration before the session concluded; it also passed the House Criminal Justice Committee and full House unanimously this session. AFP – Ohio would like to thank Representatives West and Plummer for reintroducing the bill so quickly at the beginning of the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, and we're proud to lend our support to their renewed legislative efforts.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to offer testimony today. AFP – Ohio supports HB 8, and on behalf of my organization and our affiliated activists, I urge the members of the committee to favorably report this bill. Thank you.

*Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit [www.AmericansForProsperity.org](http://www.AmericansForProsperity.org).*

