



SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – Proponent Testimony, SB 288 (Earned Credit & Judicial Release Provisions), March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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 Senate Bill 288, specifically with respect to its provisions on today's agenda regarding modifications to earned credit and judicial release policies.

Legislative efforts related to criminal justice reform (CJR) have been a major priority for AFP – Ohio over the past several years and pursuing effective CJR policy is one of nine “Priority Initiatives” on a national level within my organization. AFP believes that an effective criminal justice system protects people and preserves public safety, respects human dignity, restores victims, removes barriers to opportunity for those with criminal records, and ensures equal justice for all.

AFP is supportive of the overwhelming majority of policy proposals contained within SB 288, and the earned credit provisions top the list in terms of prioritization. Increasing the maximum amount of earned credit that a prisoner may receive for participating in or for completing certain programming from 8% to 15% of their prison term in a positive step forward. If incarcerated individuals are actively making strides toward rehabilitation while in prison, those efforts toward self-betterment should be rewarded. Granting shorter sentences to those who

have earned them is a mutually beneficial proposal to taxpayers and the public as well. If prisoners have demonstrated that they are rehabilitated, allowing them to leave prison sooner will save taxpayer dollars, and will allow businesses and communities to utilize their talents as employees, volunteers, and as friends and neighbors.

AFP also supports the provisions of SB 288 dealing with judicial release. The most notable change to judicial release covered in the bill is allowing incarcerated individuals to have ability to petition for release immediately during a state of emergency declared by the governor. Government processes and programs tend to be one-size-fits-all, but if the past two years has taught us anything, hopefully it is that there are many factors at play in the human condition that are unforeseeable and rapidly changing. Modifying existing judicial processes to more fully respect situational idiosyncrasies allows for more humane results to occur and ultimately upholds the dignity of those within and affected by the system.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to offer testimony today, for your sponsorship of SB 288, and for your years of effective leadership in the General Assembly on CJR issues. AFP would also like to publicly thank President Huffman for prioritizing criminal justice reform and for empowering members of the Senate to create this substantive package of legislative reforms and policy adjustments.

I'm happy to do my best to answer any questions that the committee may have.

Jeff Dillon  
Ohio Legislative Director  
Americans for Prosperity

*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).*