



State Representative Latyna M. Humphrey (OH-02)

State Representative Brian Stewart (OH-12)

Joint-Sponsor Testimony, House Bill 44

April 18th, 2023

Rep. Stewart: Good afternoon Chairman Abrams, Vice-Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and all of the other members on the Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony in favor of House Bill 44, which will require that electronic recordings of parole board hearings be kept, and made available for purposes of preparing a transcript of the proceedings.

Currently, the Ohio Parole Board is not required to record and preserve its proceedings. This is notable because as of 2020, of which is the most current data, 22,769 Ohioans are subject to parole¹. It is curious that despite virtually every other aspect of justice system being recorded and/or transcribed for later use, parole proceedings affecting a substantial population of our state are not preserved at all.

If Ohio requires every municipal court-level eviction proceeding to be recorded, and available for transcription, we believe that this minimal level of record-keeping should also apply to the Ohio Parole Board. I was happy to joint sponsor this legislation because I believe it is the kind of common sense improvement to our justice system that should appeal to Ohioans across the political spectrum. Stated another way, whether one is more concerned about the prospect of the Ohio Parole Board releasing convicted felons back into our community, or more concerned that the Board is deciding to continue the denial of an individual's

¹ *Ohio 2020*. Ohio 2020 | National Institute of Corrections. (n.d.). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://nicic.gov/resources/nic-library/state-statistics/2020/ohio-2020>

freedoms, having a record of the proceedings would be good policy. It benefits the public in being able to review and understand what goes into these decisions, and it potentially benefits the Ohio Parole Board, by allowing the members to, in effect, "show their work" and demonstrate how they came to the decision they did.

I appreciate the opportunity to join Rep. Humphrey in this effort, and will attempt to answer any questions members may have.
