

Committees:

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**Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz
The Ohio House of Representatives**

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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 67: Regards subsequent reduction in penalties for prior offenders

Chair Abrams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 67. This legislation offers offenders the opportunity to retroactively reduce their sentences for qualifying offenses, excluding certain violent crimes. This bill is a reintroduction of HB 708 from the 134th General Assembly.

The essential purpose of this HB 67 is to afford offenders who have been convicted of a crime the right to petition the sentencing court for a reduction or elimination of their sentence if, subsequent to the conviction, the General Assembly enacts new legislation that reduces the sentence to a level lower than the offender's sentence or eliminates the offense for which the offender was sentenced. For example, if a crime formerly classified as a felony is later reduced to a misdemeanor, an offender convicted as a felon would have the right to petition the sentencing court to reduce the sentence to the misdemeanor level and to have the record reclassified as such. At the suggestion of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, we have excluded from the bill offenders whose sentences were the result of a plea bargain because "a deal is a deal".

The Criminal Sentencing Commission would be tasked with monitoring the new laws we pass and advising the public defenders around the state of laws that might trigger the opportunity for a prior offender to seek the relief offered by the bill. The Criminal Sentencing Commission has agreed to undertake this responsibility.

The bill is very much in keeping with the General Assembly's general belief that offenders deserve every reasonable opportunity to reintegrate into society as taxpaying workers and family members, and represents one more step down the road to attainment of that goal.

Thanks again for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.