

41ST HOUSE DISTRICT

LUCAS COUNTY

Committees

Vice Chair Criminal Justice,
Higher Education, Primary and
Secondary Education, Economic
and Workforce Development



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**State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives**

Chairman Abrams, Ranking Member Brown, and fellow members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony with my colleague and joint sponsor Representative Bird on House Bill 314.

I am pleased to bring this bill before the committee today, in part because of its brevity and simplicity. This bill repeals Section 2151.271 of the ORC which allows for juvenile cases to be transferred from the county in which the offense was committed to the county of the juvenile's residence. We have heard a great deal of frustration from constituents regarding this practice and believe that its repeal would ensure justice for the accused as well as for victims of crime.

In November of 2017, voters overwhelmingly supported the Ohio Crime Victim's Bill or Rights, otherwise known as Marsy's Law. Marsy's law enumerated a list of rights for crime victims, including the right to be present at the criminal proceedings of their victimizer. Section 2151.271, the law this bill seeks to repeal, places an undue hardship on victims by requiring them to travel to the county of the perpetrator, catering to the accused rather than the victim. Furthermore, when criminal proceedings are moved from the county they occurred in to the county where the defendant lives, the law enforcement officers connected to the case must travel out of their own jurisdiction for potentially multiple hearings and a trial for the defendant. This detracts from law enforcement's ability to serve their own community and is a drain of time and costs in transportation

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for local law enforcement. Again, this practice caters to the defendant not only at the expense of the victim, but law enforcement as well.

Standing trial in the county where a crime occurred is an issue of justice and safety for communities. Local jurisdictions should be the sole arbiter for crimes committed within their confines, as they have the most incentive to charge the offender appropriately. In contrast, the county of residence of the offender has no link to the victim nor the crime, and therefore does not have the same interest in adjudicating the penalty for the offense.

HB 314 would resolve these issues of victim's rights and place authority back into the hands of local communities, who are best placed to determine penalties for criminals.

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