

**Committees:**

Chair, Primary & Secondary Education  
Higher Education  
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Pensions



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**Representative Adam C. Bird  
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**Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 314  
Before the House Committee on Criminal Justice  
November 28, 2023**

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 314, regarding juvenile court transfer.

Recently in Clermont County, a very young, adolescent, autistic girl was raped by a teenager from a neighboring county. This criminal rapist eventually admitted his crime and plead guilty. After pleading guilty, his sentencing was not handled by Clermont County Juvenile Court which is where the crime was committed. The sentencing took place in the rapist's home county.

The family of the victim was unhappy and underwhelmed by the virtual slap on the wrist that the rapist received. To add insult to injury, it is reported that the teen rapist has not followed through on the slap-on-the-wrist "punishment" that he received from his home county.

Because current law in Ohio allows a juvenile proceeding to be transferred to the county in which the juvenile lives, this teen is not even being held accountable for the very light sentencing that he received. It is indeed hurtful and angering to the family of the victim that our system does not hold criminals accountable.

I believe that if the sentencing would have been held in Clermont County, that our juvenile court system would have done a fair job of sentencing and would make sure that the sentence was carried out.

HB 314 would require that the juvenile perpetrator be tried and sentenced in the county in which the crime was committed. If the juvenile is capable of traveling to another county to break the law, then the juvenile is capable of traveling to another county to be tried and sentenced. Let's not enable crime. I ask this committee to support HB 314 and help hold criminals accountable.

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Chair Abrams and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important piece of legislation. I am happy to answer your questions.