

Proponent Testimony for HB 221 - Written Only
House Criminal Justice Committee
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Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Robbie Seaton-Todd, and I grew up and live in Mentor. I am a firm believer in helping to free innocent people from death row.

Therefore, I am writing in proponent testimony for HB 221. I have heard the story of Tony Apanovitch, a man who has spent nearly 40 years on Ohio's death row despite already being acquitted and released due to indisputably exculpatory DNA evidence. However, after 2.5 years of peaceful freedom with his family, **Mr. Apanovitch was forced back to death row in 2018 on a procedural technicality** over who requested the DNA evidence that proved his innocence.

It seems unconscionable that we would allow this procedural loophole to persist. Expanding postconviction access to DNA evidence that shows actual innocence is one of the most important actions this criminal justice committee can take.

Voting this bill forward and championing it into law would express a clear commitment to legal fairness, common sense, and to expanding access to justice and relief for those who have been heinously wronged.

Every time I visit with Tony on death row, he and I discuss how important it would be for lawmakers to fix this loophole that's endangered and upended entire families. I urge you to help prevent any more innocent people from being ripped away from their families and forced back to death row over a procedural technicality. Please right this wrong.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Robbie Seaton-Todd