



**Representative Terrence Upchurch  
20<sup>th</sup> House District**

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and the members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 325.

HB 325 will require each county and municipal correctional facility and state correctional institution to provide teletypewriters (TTY) at no cost for our deaf, hard of hearing, or severely hearing-impaired inmates. These TTYs allow a person to write or type what they would like to say and then whatever was typed is read out loud.

This legislation was birthed from a conversation I was having with one of my constituents, Rico Dancy, who explained the extreme challenges deaf/hard of hearing people go through but especially in jail and prison. There was an incident in a Baltimore jail where a deaf inmate was killed by guard, all because of a lack of communication and clear understanding. I want to prevent anything like that from ever happening in Ohio, we want to make sure all Ohioans are protected, including those currently incarcerated and we want to be sure that they have access to fair and equal treatment.

Thank you all for the opportunity to testify on HB 325, I urge a yes vote and am open to answer any questions from the committee.

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