

House Finance Committee/ Proponent Testimony

Ohio House Bill 259

Written Testimony Only

Jason Miller

10-9-23

Dear Chairman Edward, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio House Bill 259.

As a pro-life Catholic I believe that we should protect all life including those on death row. The state should not be executing its citizens.

Since 1973, more than 195 death row inmates have been exonerated of all charges and released, and with that many exonerees. Ohio is home to 11 death row exonerees who collectively spent 216 years incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. For every five people the state of Ohio has executed, one has been found innocent. This kind of mistake is far too frequent when human lives are at stake.

It is estimated that death penalty trials cost Ohio taxpayers as much as \$128 million to \$384 million.

While people of color make up less than 15% of Ohio's population, they make up 56% of Ohio's death row, 33% of those executed, and 72% of those exonerated. When Ohio executions have taken place, 75% of the time the crime committed has involved a white victim.

As of today, 24 states plus Washington D.C. have cut ties with the death penalty. Ohio can and should be the next.

A recent statewide public opinion poll in Ohio by The Tarrance Group found that 59% of those surveyed support replacing the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this critically important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.