



December 6, 2024  
Chairman Scott Wiggam  
House State and Local Government Committee  
1 Capitol Square Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Dean, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Lauren Krisai, and I am the Executive Director of Justice Action Network, a national bipartisan organization that has advocated for evidence based and data driven criminal justice policies in Ohio since 2015. I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 198 and want to thank Senator Lang and Senator Manning for their leadership on this important issue. We have worked with these legislative leaders and Ohio agency stakeholders on fine tuning this policy since early 2023.

When a person is released from prison, data consistently shows that the most important factor in reducing recidivism is employment. The longer the person goes without obtaining employment after release—even if that amount of time is a few days—the more likely they are to recidivate and end up back in the justice system.

We have spoken to employers across the country—including in Ohio—who are struggling to fill jobs right now. Many people who serve their time in prison are ready to put it behind them by the time they get out. They're ready for that second chance, they're ready to work, and they're ready to provide for themselves and their families again.

If these motivated individuals don't have an ID or know what their social security number is, they have to navigate the bureaucratic process of getting one or both of those things and are therefore spending less time applying for jobs in the crucial days following release.

Senate Bill 198 streamlines that process by requiring the Ohio DRC, DYS, and the BMV to coordinate in providing these crucial documents to eligible individuals nearing the end of their incarceration so they're ready to apply for a job on day one. Or put simply: **Senate Bill 198 will enhance Ohio's workforce through meaningful re-entry preparation.**

This bill will benefit employers and those leaving incarceration alike and is modeled on similar pieces of workforce enhancing legislation that have passed in states such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Utah. This is what strong workforce development and criminal justice reform legislation is all about: establishing data driven, commonsense policies that are proven to improve workforce opportunities, reduce recidivism, and create fewer crime victims in the future.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of this bill today and thank you for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Krisai", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lauren Krisai  
Executive Director  
Justice Action Network