



PROPONENT TESTIMONY – AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY, OHIO – SB 198 – SENATE SMALL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE – 2.27.24

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Wilkin, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 198. My name is Hannah Kubbins and I'm the Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity, Ohio (AFP). AFP's mission is to empower every American to pursue their version of the American dream. Part of obtaining and living that American dream is removing barriers for individuals to contribute their unique talents to society.

Approximately 77 million Americans, or one in three adults, have a criminal record.¹ Criminal records – which can be an arrest record, criminal charges, or a conviction – create barriers to jobs, occupational licensing, housing, and higher education opportunities.

Most of the people exiting prison no longer have a driver's license, birth certificate, or social security card. These forms of identification are necessary for them to do almost everything – from opening a bank account to securing medical care – but each can be very difficult to secure without have at least one of the others.

SB 198 removes this significant barrier to reentry into the workforce by requiring the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Department of Youth Services to provide eligible inmates with important documentation, including:

- Photo ID or driver's license
- Copy of birth certificate
- SSN card
- A copy of any vocational training or work record

We believe that accountability is an essential component of justice, but when someone has fulfilled the debt they owe to our community, it is essential that we incentivize them to become productive citizens in their communities and avoid future criminal behavior. We believe states must continue to enact laws that help individuals successfully reenter society after going through the criminal justice system, especially as we consider the ongoing workforce shortage standing in

¹ <https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/criminal-records-and-reentry-toolkit#:~:text=Approximately%2077%20million%20Americans%2C%20or,housing%2C%20and%20higher%20education%20opportunities.>

the way of improving our economy. Thank you to Senator Lang and Senator Manning for championing this important issue. We look forward to future conversations on SB 198.