



Senate Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee
Senate Bill 198
Written Proponent Testimony Only

Rev. Dr. Amariah McIntosh

27 February 2024

Dear Chairman Staton, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Small Business & Economic Opportunity Committee,

My name is Rev. Dr. Amariah H. McIntosh and I am a resident of Bowling Green in Wood County. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 198.

I am the Associate Director of the Ohio Council of Churches and a church pastor in Akron. Before coming to Ohio, I lived and worked in Lexington, Kentucky and I chaired a committee that worked on this very issue for Fayette County, Kentucky so I feel I can offer relevance to the need for this type of legislation.

During the research process on reducing recidivism rates among Fayette County residents, I learned that a high percentage of recidivism was due to technical issues rather than because they were actually committing criminal offenses. Technical issues was defined as failure to comply with terms of parole or probation.

As each of us know, a state issued identification card is essential to conduct every day business. Obtaining an ID is an obstacle for many former offenders because of the forms required to validate a persons identity and for some the cost of getting the ID. Our Kentucky group made a visit to an Indiana State Reformatory where they had already begun this process. What we saw happening there, we brought back and proposed to the County Jailer who agreed to utilize a similar process.

Many of Ohio inmates do not have a valid ID and while incarcerated have no means of getting one. SB 198 will help reduce the obstacles that make it difficult for ex-offenders to comply with the terms of their release. To begin the process while they are incarcerated and minimize the difficulties (such as obtaining a birth certificate) of gathering the necessary materials needed, Ohio will show that it cares about its citizens returning to society and will do what it can to ease the obstacles so that they can be in compliance as well as showing that we believe that ex-offenders can contribute to their communities.

I join my voice with others around the state of Ohio that are calling for passage of SB198. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.

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