



**House Bill 96
Testimony of Carlos Walker
on behalf of
Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association**

March 4, 2025

Chairwoman White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of increased funding for the 422 Criminal Justice Line Item under the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS). This funding supports the Addiction Treatment Program (ATP), Jail Reimbursement Program, and Community Transition Program, all of which play a crucial role in Ohio's justice system, reducing recidivism, and providing essential services to individuals in need. I am here on behalf of the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association (OCPOA) to emphasize the critical impact these programs have on individuals and communities across the state.

Specifically, I want to highlight the importance of the Addiction Treatment Program (ATP), a vital resource that funds drug court services, including transportation to treatment, obtaining driver's licenses, housing, uniforms, counseling, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and case management. These services are essential in helping individuals recover and successfully reintegrate into their communities.

In the State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY24), ATP served over 6,000 participants and allocated nearly \$6 million to client needs, reflecting an 18% increase in enrollment from the previous year. Currently, 153 specialized dockets across 65 counties depend on ATP funding. The demand for these dockets continues to grow, with the number of operational dockets increasing from 206 in 2016 to 260 in 2023, according to the Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets. Despite this expansion, funding is not meeting demand, leaving many counties struggling to meet the needs of individuals seeking treatment and recovery support. Programs such as ATP continue to keep nonviolent offenders engaged in treatment.

To sustain ATP's impact and ensure continued access to these critical services, OCPOA requests a \$1 million annual increase in ATP funding as proposed in House Bill 96.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Carlos Walker

President, OCPOA President

Director of Probation, Montgomery County Common Pleas