

2nd House District

Franklin County

Columbus Office

Vern Riffe Center

77 S. High Street

10th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111

(614) 466-8010



Latyna M. Humphrey
State Representative

Committees

Correctional Institution
Inspection Committee
(Vice Chair)
Government Oversight
(Ranking Member)
Energy
Community
Revitalization
Public Safety

Good Afternoon, Chairman Hall, Vice-Chair Ferguson, and Members of the Government Oversight Committee.

I am here today to discuss HB 31, legislation aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in Ohio's Parole Board process. Under current law, Parole Board Hearings are not required to be recorded or transcribed. Unlike official court proceedings that determine an individual's freedom, the Parole Board currently provides only a summary digest of its hearings. Whereas all on-the-record court proceedings are transcribed with a Stenographer or Court Reporter present. This lack of documentation leaves victims, families, and the community without sufficient access to the decision-making process.

Our bill seeks to address this gap by:

1. **Mandating Electronic Recordings:** Full Parole Board Hearings will be electronically recorded and classified as public records under Ohio's Public Records Law.
2. **Enhancing Access:** Victims, the individual subject to the hearing, their attorney, and the prosecuting attorney will be entitled to request and access these recordings.
3. **Maintaining Privacy Protections:** Victim information will remain protected under Ohio public records laws, ensuring a balance between transparency and personal privacy.

By enacting these measures, this legislation will foster public confidence in the Parole Board's decisions by providing greater clarity and accessibility. It will also ensure that decisions impacting a victim's justice and an inmate's freedom are documented and available for appropriate review.

The bill also includes safeguards to maintain confidentiality for other parole hearings, such as Institutional Parole Board Release Consideration Hearings and Revocation Hearings. While these hearings will still be recorded, access will be restricted to individuals directly involved to prevent misuse of sensitive information.

To Recap:

- The bill proposes that all other parole board hearings (including Institutional Parole Board Release Consideration Hearings, Revocation Hearings, Post-Release Control Revocation Hearings, and other types of Parole Board Hearings) will still be recorded but will only be accessible to individuals directly involved in the hearing. These hearings will be conducted with strict confidentiality to ensure no information is used maliciously and to prevent any unintended consequences.
- The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) will be responsible for providing electronic recordings of these hearings (excluding Full Board Hearings) to entitled persons.
- Furthermore, the bill stipulates that any individual entitled to receive the electronic recording of a hearing (excluding Full Board Hearings) must:
 - Not make copies of the recording.
 - Maintain the confidentiality of the recording.
 - Refrain from posting the recording on the internet.

Transparency is fundamental to democracy, particularly when decisions affect individuals' rights and freedoms. This legislation guarantees that Full Parole Board Hearings are properly documented, allowing victims, families, and communities across Ohio access to the information they deserve.

I urge your support for this legislation to bring accountability and transparency to Ohio's parole process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am happy to answer any questions.