

Support Testimony for HB 211

November 10, 2025

Dear Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of House Bill 211. We are proud to support Ohio leaders advancing this and other improvements to our public safety systems.

The Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ) is a multi-state organization that promotes effective approaches to public safety in states across the country. We support strategies that reduce costly reliance on incarceration, increase trauma recovery services, and prioritize safe communities.

HB 211 would require courts to consider a person's caregiving responsibilities for minor children when assessing eligibility for diversion or determining the most appropriate sentence. Incarceration can have a profound impact on families, particularly when it removes children's primary caretaker from their home. An estimated one in ten children in Ohio — more than 270,000 kids — has experienced the incarceration of a parent.¹ Parental incarceration is associated with a wide range of both immediate and long-lasting challenges for children, including mental health disorders, behavioral challenges, decreased educational and economic opportunity, and even increased risk that the children will become involved in the criminal justice system themselves.² Simply put, the dramatic disruption of incarcerating someone at the center of a child's world can negatively impact that child's life — and public safety more broadly — for decades to come.

A growing number of states are adopting policy changes to recognize the unique considerations and responsibilities of primary caretakers of children during court proceedings and other criminal justice processes.³ HB 211 would ensure that defendants who are the primary caretakers of minor children have the opportunity to make courts aware of those caregiving responsibilities so that judges can determine the most appropriate justice system response.

In closing, we urge you to pass HB 211 - a common-sense, bipartisan public safety bill. Please let us know if we can provide any more information. We thank you for your dedication and ongoing leadership on improving public safety in Ohio.

Shaena Fazal
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Alliance for Safety and Justice

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016), [A Shared Sentence: The Devastating Toll of Parental Incarceration on Kids, Families, and Communities](#).

² Eric Martin (2017), "[Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children](#)," *NIJ Journal Issue 278*.

³ Prison Policy Initiative (2023), [How 12 states are addressing family separation by incarceration — and why they can and should do more](#).