



**Senate Bill 295
Senate Judiciary Committee
Sponsor Testimony
Senator Nathan H. Manning
February 11th, 2026**

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Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 295.

In the summer of 2024 in Cuyahoga County, Delawnte Hardy shot his grandmother and while on the run, shot and killed Cleveland police officer Jamieson Ritter who was attempting to arrest him. His grandmother later died from her injuries. The defendant was deemed incompetent to stand trial for these murders and ordered to undergo treatment to restore him to competency. Senate Bill 295 makes three critical changes to current Ohio law to address serious issues that were highlighted in the unfortunate events that have occurred in this case since these egregious events.

First, mental health hospitals charged with restoring these defendants to competency will have to notify the court when a defendant refuses to comply with their treatment plan. Under this legislation, notification must be made within fourteen days of refusal. In the case of State v. Hardy, it was not until six months after the competency restoration plan was ordered that the State learned the defendant had been refusing to take his medication.

Second, defendants will no longer be able to deliberately run out the clock to avoid being held accountable for their actions. Under Senate Bill 295, courts will be able to toll competency periods, meaning they will be able to temporarily suspend or pause the legal deadline, when failure to comply with treatment is occurring.

Finally, the time frame for competency restoration will now more adequately reflect the seriousness of the crime. Under current Ohio law, there is a short 1-year period for competency restoration, even for the most serious offenses like aggravated murder, murder, or an offense of violence for which a sentence of death or life imprisonment may

be imposed. In passing this legislation, the timeline will be increased from one year to five years for the most serious offenses.

Though the judge granted the State additional time in this case, if the 1-year restoration period does still expire, Cuyahoga County will have to seek a civil commitment for the defendant. This extension is up on February 19th, next Thursday. This commitment is not a guarantee, and the defendant may be deemed unrestorable and be released back into the community. This would mean dismissed murder charges and no further opportunity to restore this defendant's competency unless he commits a new crime. It is because of these reasons in this current case along with other cases in the future, that we see the urgent need for changes in current law.

Members of the Committee, thank you again for allowing us to testify. We would be happy to answer questions at this time.