



Proponent Testimony for House Bill 23

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the esteemed House Committee on Public Safety.

My name is Kevin Coughlin, and I have had the honor of serving as a state representative and two-term state senator. During my time in the legislature, I worked on several important pieces of legislation, including a bill that authorized Ohio's Amber Alert system, a tool that has saved countless lives. I am proud of that work, and I am confident HB 23 will be a vital measure to ensure Ohioans receive critical and time sensitive information about an emerging public danger. This leads to more awareness of the situation which can assure the safety of Ohio residents.

I'm very concerned, particularly in Summit County, where we've seen numerous escapes by convicted felons. This bill is an important step in keeping Ohio's communities safe by closing the communication gap and ensuring that when a dangerous felon escapes custody, Ohioans are not left unaware and unprotected. This will be especially valuable in cases where individuals have been inadvertently released, lost in transport, or have failed to return from a furlough.

This bill will not overburden the existing Amber Alert system, it simply tracks escaped felons and other high-risk individuals akin to how Amber Alerts successfully inform.

I urge the committee to support HB 23. It will provide law enforcement with the ability to react more swiftly to escapes, inform residents, and ultimately make Ohio a safer place for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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