

May 23, 2025

Dear Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important budgeting effort. We write to express our support for three budget amendments that will improve public safety in Ohio:

1. Expanding the Safe At Home Program to Protect More Victims of Violent Crime
2. Expanding TCAP Statewide for People with the Lowest Level Nonviolent Felonies
3. Funding the Civil Impacts of Criminal Convictions (CIVICC) Database

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 also bring together diverse crime survivors via our flagship program, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, to advance policies that help underserved crime victims and stop cycles of crime. Our Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice network has over 200,000 members nationwide, including over 12,000 in Ohio. We support strategies that reduce costly over-reliance on incarceration, increase trauma recovery services, and build healthy communities.

1. Expanding the Safe At Home Program to Protect More Victims of Violent Crime

Ohio's Safe at Home address confidentiality program was created in 2016 to allow survivors of certain types of violence to conceal their home addresses in order to stay safe from people who may harm them. Currently, survivors of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape, or sexual battery are eligible to participate in the program and keep their addresses confidential.

However, survivors of other types of violence may also need to protect information about where they live. For example, a gunshot victim may need to move to secure their safety, and then shield their new address from people who may come to harm them again.

This budget amendment would extend eligibility for Ohio's Safe at Home address confidentiality program to survivors of other types of violent assault, including victims of gun violence and family members of homicide victims. This proposed expansion has the strong support of our Ohio Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice membership across the state.

For nearly ten years, the Safe at Home program has been providing a critical service to crime survivors, and it's time to extend those same protections to more victims of violence in need of help to stay safe. Importantly, this proposed amendment includes a reallocation within the Secretary of State's budget that ensures the program expansion will be cost-neutral.

2. Expanding TCAP Statewide for People with the Lowest Level Nonviolent Felonies

Ohio's Targeted Community Alternatives Program (TCAP) was created in 2017 to help counties keep eligible people with low-level, non-violent felonies locally and use community-based sanctions such as jails or community control, rather than send them to state prisons. The program has been a win-win, limiting state spending on people with low-level convictions who do not need to be sent to prison and sending a portion of those savings to county law

enforcement. TCAP grant money supports proven local solutions to interrupt cycles of crime, including treatment, supervision, and rehabilitative programming. Today, 63 of Ohio's 88 counties participate in TCAP, and data show that the program has been highly successful in these jurisdictions.

Nonparticipating jurisdictions, on the other hand, send a disproportionate number of people with the lowest-level felonies to prisons, tying up the state's limited safety dollars on prison beds for people with minor convictions who the majority of Ohio counties hold accountable at the local level. Our analysis of DRC prison commitment data shows that this small number of non-TCAP counties drive admissions to prison for the lowest level nonviolent felonies:

- Non-TCAP counties have just 19% of the state's population but over half (52%) of commitments to prison for the lowest level felony offenses.
- People with the lowest level felonies are three times more likely to be sanctioned in the community in TCAP counties than in non-TCAP counties.

We urge you to support the proposed budget amendment to maximize the safety impact of this proven and successful program by expanding TCAP statewide. Statewide TCAP expansion would result in an estimated additional \$44 million in savings to DRC, \$6 million in grants to local law enforcement, and \$38 million in net annual savings. These savings could support other public safety goals including crime prevention and services for victims of crime. Statewide TCAP expansion would also ensure that the criminal justice system's approach to addressing low-level non-violent offenses is consistent regardless of where in the state a case occurs.

3. Funding the Civil Impacts of Criminal Convictions (CIVICC) Database

The Civil Impacts of Criminal Convictions (CIVICC) Database was created to support workforce engagement among people who have served their time by cataloging the professional licensing and employment restrictions associated with having a prior record. This allowed people seeking to reengage with the workforce to understand which pathways were available to them, and also clarified eligibility for employers considering hiring people with a prior record. This database was maintained until 2022, when funding was discontinued and it was shut down.

A modest \$100,000 appropriation and instructing language would allow the Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) to once again provide this workforce development resource. We urge you to pass the proposed budget amendment that would reinstate the CIVICC database.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the above three budget amendments that would protect victims, promote public safety, save taxpayer resources, and support workforce engagement and the Ohio economy. We urge you to include all three in the Senate's version of the budget, and we stand ready to support you in the critical work of improving public safety in Ohio.

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