



Saturday, January 25, 2025

Dear Senate Finance Committee.

As an Ohio resident and a neighbor to all, **I fervently request lines 14,899-14,902, 14,909-14,914, 15,190-15,198, and 41,062-41,068 in House Bill 96, As Passed by the House, be removed.** In addition to those lines, **any relevant sections that would inhibit transparency from Police Departments and access to what should be public records.** No changes to public records law should be approved.

The proposed changes to public records law can be interpreted to any criminal record being denied to the public, indefinitely.

Those sections of the House Bill 96 are not relevant to the Ohio budget, but **will prevent exonerations.** This is **without** assumption or accusation of law enforcement and prosecutors, but the reality that even the most righteous person is only human, subject to mistakes and is finite.

In the state of Ohio, **over 100 people have been wrongly incarcerated** for a crime they did not commit. Eleven of those innocent people had been on death row before investigators uncovered incriminating, often withheld evidence. Here is a statistic to think about: Since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1981, almost 20% of death row inmates turned out to be innocent.

When people are wrongly incarcerated, that leaves actual criminals free to continue to commit those crimes, including but not limited to rape and murder. Being "tough on crime" means making sure the right person is incarcerated so the public is safe. Transparency protects the integrity of ongoing legal proceedings. Transparency keeps the public safe.

I fervently request lines 14,899-14,902, 14,909-14,914, 15,190-15,198, and 41,062-41,068 in House Bill 96, As Passed by the House, be removed and rejected.

Namaste'

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