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As an intern of Northwest Ohio Innocence Clinic, 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 information has historically been available to Ohioans through public records.** No changes to public records law should be approved.

The proposed changes to public records law can be interpreted to *any* record being denied to the public, indefinitely. Those sections of the House Bill 96 are not relevant to the budget and, if passed, **will deny justice to all innocent prisoners in Ohio.** This is without assumption or accusation of law enforcement and prosecutors, but the reality is that even the most righteous person is only human and subject to mistakes.

In the state of Ohio, over 100 people have been wrongly incarcerated for a crime they did not commit. We know this because eventually, their convictions were overturned after investigation of the evidence. Eleven of those people had been on death row before investigators uncovered incriminating, often withheld, evidence. Since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1981, almost 20% of death row inmates **were innocent.** Every one of those people was an entire world.

Inmates and families who have been wronged by the system have lost decades. And we, the citizens, are not any safer when the wrong person is locked up. In fact, transparency, which promotes integrity, promotes the type of thorough decision-making that leads state actors to incarcerate the truly guilty and to allow the innocent to walk free. Transparency promotes more than an appearance of safety in our justice system. It promotes true safety for the public and for the accused alike.-Transparency protects the integrity of ongoing legal proceedings. Transparency keeps the public safe. Transparency is what we need now within the law, not limitations of transparency such as exist in the lines of House Bill 96 of which I seek removal.

As a member of Northwest Ohio Innocence Clinic, my fellow interns and I use the exact type of public records that are likely threatened by lines **14,899-14,902, 14,909-14,914, 15,190-15,198, and 41,062-41,068 in House Bill 96.** We dissect wrongful convictions after the fact, such as the case of Danny Brown. Because of the nature of our work, this public records rider could shut down our program. I feel confident that that is not what the majority of Ohio voters would want.

I repeat, Ohioans need transparency within our laws through access to public records. Anything less would be an attack on the integrity of our criminal conviction systems and thus an attack on Ohioan safety. The price of transparency is too high, and we are not willing to pay it. **I fervently request lines 14,899-14,902, 14,909-14,914, 15 hmm h5,190-15,198, and 41,062-41,068 in House Bill 96, As Passed by the House, be removed.**

Sincerely,  
*Mersadise Aichele*