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Lima & Toledo

Community Assessment & Treatment
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Community Corrections Association, Inc -
Youngstown

Community Correctional Center,
Talbert House -Lebanon

Community Restoration Centers of Stark
County, Inc. - Canton

Community Transition Center - Lancaster

CROSSWAEH CBCF, Oriana House, Inc. -
Tiffin

Judge Nancy R. McDonnell CBCF,
Oriana House, Inc. - Cleveland

Mahoning County CBCF, Community
Corrections Association, Inc. -
Youngstown

Oriana House, Inc. - Akron, Cleveland,
Marietta, Sandusky

Summit County CBCF Oriana House, Inc. -
Akron

Talbert House - Cincinnati

The Salvation Army Harbor Light -
Cleveland

Turtle Creek, Talbert House - Lebanon

Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana -
Cincinnati, Dayton, Mansfield, Toledo

Good evening, Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee. My name is Linda Janes. I serve as the immediate Past President of the Ohio Community Corrections Association and the Chief Operating Officer for Alvis, Inc. with facilities in Central Ohio, Chillicothe, Lima, and Toledo.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to offer Interested Party testimony on House Bill 96, the state operating budget. The collaborative working relationship between the Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and community corrections providers has led to Ohio's position as a leader in community corrections in the country. Today, community corrections providers offer a full menu of sanctions and services including probation supervision, residential drug or mental health treatment, cognitive programming, electronic monitoring, community service, and case management to assist with public safety and successful reentry from jail or prison.

We appreciate the commitment made by the Administration and the Ohio General Assembly in adequately funding community corrections, and we ask for your continued support. However, we would like to draw your attention to a provision added in the Ohio House of Representatives omnibus amendment (see DRCCD20 in the comparison document for the House-passed bill) that could result in the closure of much needed community corrections programs. The Ohio House added language that prohibits licensing a "halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center that operates within 500 feet of a school or childcare center."

The change proposed in existing Ohio Revised Code Section 2967.14 that greatly concerns OCCA states:

*The division of parole and community services may license a halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center as a suitable facility for the care and treatment of adult offenders, including offenders sentenced under section 2929.16 or 2929.26 of the Revised Code, only if the halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center **does not operate within five hundred feet of a school or child care center and** complies with the standards that the division adopts in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for the licensure of halfway houses, reentry centers, and community residential centers. The division shall annually inspect each licensed halfway house, licensed reentry center, and licensed community residential center to determine if it is in compliance with the licensure standards.*

This added requirement was not vetted in the House, and as far as we know, no individuals or organizations testified to ask for the change. We understand why someone might think this is beneficial, we take the safety of our staff, the offenders we serve, and the neighborhoods we work in very seriously. But should this provision be enacted; it would forever place our members' community facilities at risk. A new school, in-home childcare location, or childcare center that is sited within 500 feet of these human service facilities would then jeopardize the existence of any pre-existing or future facility since DRC relicenses our members every biennium.

OCCA believes this is an unnecessary incursion into the zoning authority of local governments. All halfway houses, reentry centers, and community residential centers are subject to thorough local zoning processes. Existing halfway houses have navigated this rigorous process to site facilities that both meet local standards and provide the programming, support, and supervision necessary for the successful reentry of justice-involved individuals in communities across Ohio.

Re-siting an agency is extremely difficult and cumbersome, as well as an expensive process, impacting a program that may have been in a community for decades. The language has nothing to do with an agency's merit or whether they have been good and productive members in Ohio communities, and it opens an agency to certain peril if a new childcare center opens between state inspections. A provider who has served their neighborhoods and improved public safety by addressing clients' assessed needs, providing workforce training for clients, and creating jobs for citizens who work at the non-profit could be summarily displaced by a childcare of a much smaller scale.

We humbly request that you remove DRCCD20 with amendment SC0695 from House Bill 96, and we would be grateful for your support.

Chairwoman and esteemed members, we appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony and the leadership that each of you provides to our great state of Ohio. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time. Thank you!

Please forward additional questions to:

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SC0695

Am. Sub. H. B. No. 96
As Passed by the House
DRCCD20

_____ moved to amend as follows:

Delete lines 41209 through 41811 (remove R.C. 2967.14, 2967.26, and 2967.271) 1
2
Delete lines 106838 through 106994 (remove R.C. 5120.035) 3
Update the title, amend, enact, or repeal clauses accordingly 4

The motion was _____ agreed to.

SYNOPSIS

Reentry housing near schools 5
6
R.C. 2967.14 with conforming changes in R.C. 2967.26, 2967.271, and 5120.035 7
8
Removes a provision that would have prohibited DRC's 9
Division of Parole and Community Services from licensing a 10
halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center 11
that operates within 500 feet of a school or child care center. 12

Legislative Service Commission

