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May 12, 2025

The Honorable Susan Manchester, Chair
Government Oversight and Reform Committee, Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 96, the state operating budget. The Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections (OJACC) is a coalition of stakeholders concerned with adults and youth who are involved in the criminal justice system. OJACC's membership includes judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, commissioners, CBCFs, halfway houses, probation and parole officers, behavioral health providers and housing providers. As such, OJACC not only advocates for adequate funding to effectively maintain community corrections programs, but also for funding to ensure that those requiring additional support such as mental health medication and services and substance use services such as medication assisted treatment that will allow them to be effectively served in the community in such a way as to enhance public safety.

Language added in the Ohio House of Representatives omnibus amendment which would prohibit the division of parole and community services from licensing a "halfway house, reentry center, or community residential center" within five hundred feet of a school or childcare center causes some concern. While OJACC appreciates the apprehension which appears to have prompted this amendment, we are concerned by the ambiguity of the language. Is this amendment intended to restrict the siting of new providers, or would it impact established facilities? Forcing providers to move their facilities or close completely because someone chooses to site a school or childcare facility in close proximity to an established halfway house, reentry center or community residential center would be unduly burdensome on the service provider and could result in a loss of critical services for the entire community.

As always, OJACC appreciates your consideration of our interests and concerns.

Thank you,

Ro-Ellen Sinkewich, First Vice President
Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections