



**House Bill 96
Testimony of Carlos Walker
on behalf of
Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association**

May 12, 2025

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of continued and increased funding for the Addiction Treatment Program (ATP), which is funded through the 422 Criminal Justice Line Item under the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS). This program plays a critical role in Ohio's justice system by supporting specialized dockets, reducing recidivism, and delivering essential services to individuals striving for recovery.

I am here on behalf of the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association (OCPOA) to underscore the significant impact ATP has on individuals and communities throughout our state. ATP provides crucial support to local courts, helping them operate specialized dockets by funding services such as transportation to treatment, driver's license reinstatement, housing, uniforms for employment, counseling, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and case management. These supports are vital in helping nonviolent individuals recover and successfully reintegrate into society.

In State Fiscal Year 2024, ATP served more than 6,000 participants and allocated nearly \$6 million to direct client needs—an 18% increase in enrollment over the previous year. Today, 153 specialized dockets across 65 counties rely on ATP funding. The need continues to grow, with the number of operational dockets rising from 206 in 2016 to 260 in 2023, according to the Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets. Despite this growth, funding has not kept pace, and many counties are struggling to meet the increasing demand for treatment and recovery services.

To maintain and build on this positive momentum, OCPOA respectfully requests the reinstatement of the ATP earmark at \$6 million per fiscal year over the biennium. The previous budget included this earmark at \$5 million annually, and increasing it is critical to sustaining and expanding the impact of the Addiction Treatment Program across the state. This continued investment will ensure more individuals have access to the support they need to enter treatment and succeed in recovery.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Carlos Walker

President, OCPOA President

Director of Probation, Montgomery County Common Pleas