CRIME SURVIVORS SPEAK

March 11, 2026

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important effort. As victims of violent crime, we know a lot about, and care about, keeping ourselves and our communities safe. That is why we support Senate Bill 291 and thank the Ohio state leaders advancing this and other improvements to our public safety systems.

Crime Survivors Speak, a flagship program of the Alliance for Safety and Justice, works to advance policies that help underserved crime victims and stop cycles of crime. We have nearly 200,000 crime victim members across the country, including over 13,000 in Ohio.

We hear over and over from our members that what crime survivors want most is first to be safe and have the opportunity to heal, and second for what happened to them to never happen to anyone else. This means creating common sense public safety policy that evidence shows actually makes us safer. SB 291 will update Ohio's community control system to align with what the research says keeps communities safe.

As victims of violence, we support this legislation exactly because we believe it would help people who have committed crime get the help they need while being held accountable through direct, focused supervision. Research is clear that this approach will lead to less reoffending, which means fewer victims and safer communities. And, adjusting the system so that people receive the amount of supervision that reflects their individual needs also means that Ohio's public safety leaders can spend more resources on crime prevention and critical services for survivors. We should be using more public safety resources to prevent victimization and give survivors the tools and support they need to recover from violence. This breaks cycles of crime and offers hope and healing to people like me and our Ohio members who survived violent crime.

In conclusion, SB 291 is a balanced bill that is based on research and evidence and will help communities across our state be safer places to live, work, and raise families. Thank you for your consideration of this bill today.

Aswad Thomas, MSW
National Director
Crime Survivors Speak