Hamilton County
Addiction
Response Coalition

NEWTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Colonel Thomas W. Synan Jr.
Chief of Police

3536 Church St.
Newtown, Ohio 45244
513-561-7697 Main / 513-561-7506 Fax
tsynan@villageofnewtown.com

3/4/2026

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB 291.

As the Chief of Police in Newtown, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition, I have seen firsthand both sides of addiction and the impact our supervision system can have on individuals, families, and public safety. In my career, I have arrested drug traffickers, comforted families who lost loved ones, and worked alongside officers who put their lives on the line. But I have also seen the "other side of addiction" — the parent trying to regain custody, the worker trying to keep a job, and the person in recovery who needs structure and accountability, not a trip back to prison for a technical violation.

Ohio's current community control framework does not distinguish sufficiently between levels of offense severity. Under current law, community control terms can last up to five years across the board — whether someone is convicted of a first-degree felony or a lower-level felony or misdemeanor. This one-size-fits-all approach contributes to one of the highest communities supervision rates in the country. It keeps people under supervision long after they have stabilized, increasing the likelihood of technical violations that send them to prison — not for new crimes, but for breaking supervision rules. SB 291 offers a smarter, data-driven path forward.

First, the bill creates a tiered community control structure that aligns supervision length with offense severity. It maintains the five-year cap for the most serious offenses (F1s and F2s), while creating a three-year cap for F3s, F4s, F5s, and misdemeanors. This ensures that supervision resources are focused where they are most needed — on higher-risk individuals — while allowing lower-level offenders who are compliant and rehabilitated to move forward. Second, SB 291 introduces a judicial review at the two-year mark for individuals who have complied with supervision requirements and have no recent violations. If appropriate, supervision can be presumptively terminated — unless a judge determines there is a public safety concern.

This provision creates a powerful incentive for compliance, reinforces accountability, and supports successful reintegration into the workforce and community. From a law enforcement perspective, this is not about being "soft on crime." It is about being

smart on crime. Our officers should be focused on violent offenders, repeat criminals, and serious threats to public safety — not processing paperwork for technical violations committed by someone who has otherwise done everything asked of them. Effective supervision should change behavior, reduce recidivism, and strengthen communities. SB 291 advances those goals. As someone who has spent decades working to combat addiction and protect public safety, I believe deeply in accountability. But accountability must be paired with proportionality and evidence-based policy.

When individuals succeed on supervision, we should recognize that success — not extend control unnecessarily and increase the risk of failure.

SB 291 aligns Ohio with best practices nationally, uses correctional resources more efficiently, and enhances public safety by focusing attention where it belongs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of SB 291.
Thank you for your time and your commitment to the safety and well-being of Ohio's

Col. Thomas W. Synan Jr.
Chief of Police
Newtown Police Department

Co-Founder, Co-Chair Interdiction
Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition