March 11, 2026

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

As a consortium of experts in helping Ohioans who are or at some point have navigated the community control landscape, we are writing to express our sincere support of SB 291.

As you know, community control terms in Ohio can last as long as five years for everyone, *regardless* of the case and whether the underlying offense is a serious felony or a minor misdemeanor. This is out of step with both research on what works in public safety, and the vast majority of other states' laws. As a result, Ohio's community control supervision rate is one of the highest in the nation. This over reliance on community control is taking people out of the workforce and sending them into prison for supervision rule violations, all while using resources that should instead be focused on stopping crime and supporting victims.

SB 291 will improve public safety by creating a smarter and more consistent community control structure that is responsive to individual rehabilitation needs and safety considerations. Specifically, we are supportive of how the bill will: 1) tier community control terms to reflect offense severity, 2) reward people on community control for lower-level offenses who have completed all requirements with consideration for early termination , and 3) address initial technical violations of supervision rules with appropriate sanctions. Importantly, the bill will still empower judges and corrections officers to use behavior changing tools, such as adding additional time up to the five-year cap, if necessary for people who are not following the rules or need additional intervention .

Currently, all offenses have the same five-year maximum community control term cap regardless of severity. This bill will leave that cap in place for Felony 1s and 2s, and create a tiered system of up to three years for Felony 3s, 4s, and 5s and misdemeanors. This type of adjustment is common, and states including Alaska, Alabama, Hawaii, and Texas have all revised their supervision term lengths in recent years to promote public safety and use correctional resources more efficiently. To be clear, judges will still be able to extend terms up to the current 5-year maximum when needed for things like completing programming, addressing noncompliance, and meeting requirements to pay restitution.

Additionally, this bill will create a judicial review at the two-year mark for people who have complied with all supervision requirements to determine whether or not they are ready for termination. Importantly, community control terms will not be terminated when there is a public safety concern. This review will *reduce crime* by creating a powerful incentive to comply with all requirements, and also helps to match community control time to public safety needs.

Finally, the bill will create a system of intermediate sanctions for initial technical violations of supervision rules. Currently, someone on community control can be sent to prison for any technical violation, including a minor first-time violation like missing an appointment or staying out after curfew. The bill creates tailored options with increasing severity for the first three violations that include time in jail, a community corrections facility, or a treatment program. Research shows that individualized interventions such as these are much more effective than prison to address minor rule-breaking among people on supervision.

We applaud the bill sponsors' efforts in crafting this thoughtful, bi-partisan bill that aligns Ohio with nationwide best practices while being responsive to the needs and interests of offenders, victims and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Members of the Pathways to Public Safety Coalition