Americans for Prosperity – Ohio Proponent Testimony, Senate Bill 291, Senate Judiciary Committee, 03.10.26

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 291. My name is Hannah Kubbins, and I serve as Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity – Ohio (AFP). One of our foundational beliefs is that everyone has the capacity to contribute to society, including individuals who are working to successfully reintegrate after involvement with the criminal justice system. Policies that promote rehabilitation, accountability, and proportional supervision benefit not only the individual, but also employers, communities, and taxpayers.

Senate Bill 291 reforms Ohio's community control system to better align supervision with public safety risk, individualized needs, and outcomes that reduce recidivism. By emphasizing proportional supervision, treatment-focused responses, and meaningful judicial review, SB 291 promotes a system that is both more effective and more just.

SB 291 modernizes Ohio's community control structure by establishing clearer, more consistent limits on supervision. Under the bill, community control supervision is capped at:

- Five years for first- and second-degree felonies, and
- Three years for third-, fourth-, and fifth-degree felonies.

These limits help reduce unnecessary variation in sentencing outcomes across counties and prevent individuals from remaining under supervision longer than is needed to promote accountability and rehabilitation. Lengthy supervision terms increase the likelihood of technical violations—often procedural rather than criminal in nature—which can disrupt employment, housing, and family stability without improving public safety.

SB 291 includes a mandatory judicial review after two years for individuals serving community control for third-, fourth-, and fifth-degree felony offenses. When an individual has complied with supervision conditions, completed required programming, and demonstrated stability, the court must terminate community control unless it finds that termination would pose a serious risk of physical harm.

This provision ensures that community control remains a tool for rehabilitation rather than an open-ended punishment, while still preserving judicial authority to continue supervision when clearly necessary to protect public safety.

SB 291 also refines how courts respond to technical violations of community control. Rather than defaulting to jail time, the bill expands options for judges to use community-based correctional facilities, treatment, or programming, particularly when substance use or behavioral health needs are a driving factor.

For individuals who commit minor drug possession-related technical violations after seeking medical help or engaging in treatment, SB 291 appropriately limits punitive responses and prioritizes recovery over incarceration. This approach helps individuals remain employed, connected to treatment, and on a path toward long-term stability, while still holding them accountable to the conditions of supervision.

Importantly, SB 291 maintains strong safeguards to protect public safety and victims. Courts retain the authority to:

- Extend supervision in narrowly defined circumstances involving willful noncompliance, restitution obligations, or unfinished court-ordered programming;
- Impose confinement or prison sanctions for serious or repeated violations; and
- Ensure victims receive notice and the opportunity to be heard in relevant proceedings.

This balanced framework ensures that reform does not come at the expense of accountability or community safety.

Senate Bill 291 advances a more effective, fair, and fiscally responsible approach to community control in Ohio. By combining clear supervision limits, mandatory judicial review, treatment-focused responses to technical violations, and strong public safety guardrails, SB 291 strengthens rehabilitation efforts while maintaining accountability.

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity – Ohio, I respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 291. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony. I can be reached for any questions at hkubbins@afphq.org or 614-905-2551.