



## Justice Reform

### Testimony on SB 3 before the Senate Judiciary Committee

Piet van Lier

Good afternoon Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary committee. My name is Piet van Lier, and I am the justice researcher for Policy Matters Ohio, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute with the mission of creating a more prosperous, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

I first testified on Senate Bill 3 in May of 2019, and believe now as I did then that the bill is a small but important step forward for justice reform in Ohio.

Last week, Policy Matters Ohio released a new report analyzing the impact on Ohioans' health of SB 3 and House Bill 1. With this testimony I respectfully submit a brief summary of our findings and, as an attachment, a copy of the full report.

Our review of health-related research suggests these bills would likely have positive impacts on the health of Ohio residents because they would:

- Decrease drug use and reduce prison populations. There is strong evidence that intervention in lieu of conviction and drug courts are more effective than conventional approaches to reducing drug use and recidivism.
- Reduce the “collateral consequences” of incarceration and a criminal record, which create barriers to employment, housing and public assistance. The inability to meet these basic needs is linked to poor physical and mental health outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals and their families.
- Prevent further collateral consequences arising from felony convictions by expanding opportunities for the permanent sealing of criminal records.
- Reduce overcrowding in jails and prisons, a condition that promotes disease transmission and has contributed to the wider COVID-19 pandemic.

This health note was produced using a methodology developed by the Health Impact Project at The Pew Charitable Trusts and is part of a pilot program to test the use of health notes to inform policymaking at state and local levels. Policy decisions made outside the public health and health care sectors can affect health and well-being. Health notes are intended to provide objective, nonpartisan information to help legislators understand the connections between these sectors and health. Health notes are not intended to make definitive or causal predictions.

Thank you for your work on Senate Bill 3. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding our findings about the health impact of SB 3 and HB 1 or any other aspects of justice reform within my area of expertise. You may reach me at [pvanlier@policymattersohio.org](mailto:pvanlier@policymattersohio.org) or 216-832-2102.