



Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana (VOAOHIN)

December 4, 2020

Support for S.B. No. 377 and H.B. No. 403

Chairman,

We hope today finds you well and in good health.

We understand that next week both the Senate Judiciary and House Criminal Justice committees are scheduled for proponent testimony of Senate Bill 377 House Bill 403 respectively. VOA has a long history of serving returning citizens from prison, opening the first halfway house in America in 1896. As a community corrections provider, we continue to address the issues these citizens face as they rebuild bridges to transition from prison to a productive life in the community. We believe everyone deserves a second chance – and the respect and dignity that goes along with it.

Both bills aim to make the transition more efficient for persons returning to the community, via a program called transitional control (TC). These individuals are under the supervision and guidance of a licensed halfway house, as a stepdown program for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC). VOAHOIN is in support of these bills allowing all eligible inmates to participate in the TC program in order to reduce recidivism, reduce crime and make our communities safer. These programs are evidence-based best practices and shown to be effective through research conducted by the University of Cincinnati. This is the ODRC's most effective re-entry program.

The time spent on Transitional Control, in a halfway house, allows the opportunity to receive critical re-entry services like substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational training. Participants work with the agency's professional staff to address addiction, trauma, moral injury, and mental health issues. Inmates participating in the TC program earn wages and are able to pay restitution, child support, taxes and other financial obligations as well.

We hope you will support these bills and we are happy to discuss with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew Roberts and Ro-Ellen Sinkewich

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