

House Criminal Justice Committee

Proponent Testimony Ohio Senate House Bill 183

Written Testimony Only

Shannon Hanf

September 23, 2021

Dear Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

My name is Shannon Hanf and I am a resident of Troy, Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio House Bill 183.

Since 1973, more than 185 death row inmates have been exonerated of all charges and released. Ohio is home to 11 death row exonerees who collectively spent 216 years incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. For every five people the state of Ohio has executed, one has been found innocent. This kind of mistake is far too frequent when human lives are at stake.

It is estimated that death penalty trials cost Ohio taxpayers as much as \$16 million dollars per case. Ending the death penalty in Ohio will save millions of taxpayer dollars that can be reinvested into programs and services that lower crime rates.

While people of color make up less than 15% of Ohio's population, they make up 56% of Ohio's death row, 33% of those executed, and 72% of those exonerated. When Ohio executions have taken place, 75% of the time the crime committed has involved a white victim. Abolishing the death penalty will help ensure that racial justice is served in Ohio.

As of today, 23 states plus Washington D.C. have cut ties with the death penalty. Ohio can and should be the next. A recent statewide public opinion poll in Ohio by The Tarrance Group found that 59% of those surveyed support replacing the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this critically important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify