

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Arlene Schler

HOUSE BILL 183 – Abolish the Death Penalty

Proponent; written only testimony

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

I applaud the substantial bipartisan support expressed for HB 183 – abolishing the death penalty in Ohio. The time has come to unburden Ohioans of this onerous, perhaps unconstitutional, punishment. It is a punishment that has not been shown to deter crime. It is a costly and cumbersome punishment that diverts millions of dollars and attention from the critical financial and psychological service the victim's family members need. It is a discriminatory punishment—more than 70% of people on Ohio's death row have been convicted of murdering a white person, even though more than half of all homicide victims are black. It is an unwanted punishment by a majority of Ohioans who prefer life without parole. It is a cruel punishment because for every 5 executions in Ohio the state has exonerated one person. The Ohio Legislature has adopted many reforms to protect against wrongful convictions. But we will never, never eliminate the risk of wrongful conviction completely. The death penalty is an irreversible response within an imperfect system.

Take courage and abolish the death penalty by passing HB183 out of committee and voting for it on the floor.

Thank you for your time.