

House Criminal Justice Committee

Opponent Testimony

House Joint Resolution 2

Written Testimony Only

Jessica A. Mount

April 6, 2022

Dear Chairman LaRe, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee.

My name is Jessica Mount, and I live in Cincinnati, Ohio. I am a Follower of Jesus, Compliance Director with a family shelter here in Cincinnati, Advocate for youth facing the juvenile justice system with Empowering Community Justice Initiative, and Support of my incarcerated brothers and sisters. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **opposing House Joint Resolution 2**.

I oppose HJR 2 because it doubles down on the failed status quo rather than meeting Ohioans' needs. We see far too often, families torn apart, housing and employment lost due to excessive bail amounts set for someone who hasn't even been convicted of a crime. I also oppose these changes because:

- I oppose wealth-based detention. On any given day, there are as many as 12,000 legally innocent people held in Ohio's jails, many of whom are locked up because they cannot afford the cash bail amount set in their case.
- I am concerned about public safety because currently people are released based on how much money they have, not because they pose a threat.
- I am troubled by the significant racial disparities that have been identified in cash bail setting practices.
- To me, public safety should be based on valuing justice for ALL people, not only those who have more money than others.

This Committee already has meaningful, well-thought-out comprehensive bail reform legislation before it—House Bill 315. House Bill 315 makes our communities safer by giving courts and prosecutors tools to protect public safety while at the same time ending the wealth-based detention that harms so many of our neighbors. Ohioans like me do not want or need HJR 2, and I urge you to vote no if given the opportunity to vote on it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.

*Jessica A. Mount*

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