

House Criminal Justice Committee

Opponent Testimony

House Joint Resolution 2

Written Testimony Only

Sandra Seaton-Todd

April 5, 2022

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

My name is Sandra Seaton-Todd, and I live in Mentor, Ohio. I worked as a lawyer in Cleveland for many years before becoming a minister, and I now lead 2 churches in northeast Ohio. I cannot overstate how deeply I, and many others, care about intelligent, fair, and safe policies. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **opposing House Joint Resolution 2**.

I am in profound opposition to HJR 2 because it doubles down on the failed cash bail system rather than provide Ohioans what they need. I oppose HJR 2 because:

- I oppose wealth-based detention. Ohio should not have a criminal legal system that treats people better if they are rich and guilty than if they are poor and innocent.
- I am concerned about public safety because the current bail system and HJR 2 release people based on how much money they have, not based on whether they pose a threat.
- I believe our judges should be empowered to make community-centered decisions, not have their hand forced to set cash bail amounts.
- To me, public safety means people do not have to buy their way out of jail. I believe the conditions which most protect public safety and fairness should be determined case-by-case by a judge, not by wealth.

This Committee already has meaningful, bipartisan, and 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 strongly urge you to vote no if given the opportunity to vote on it. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sandra Seaton-Todd