



# BUCKEYE STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

1103 Schrock Road, Suite 401 • Columbus, Ohio 43229 • Tel: (614) 431-5500 • Fax: (614) 431-5665

**ROBERT A. CORNWELL**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chairman Matt Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Targeting Community Alternatives to Prison, (T-CAP), has been portrayed by some as the solution for addressing prison overcrowding at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Local criminal justice practitioners have come to believe that T-CAP is nothing more than the dumping of state prisoners back into local community programs. Programs which are already overwhelmed by increasing case loads and a insufficient number of staff to handle the associated problems.

Sentenced individuals already have several opportunities to complete programs designed to assist offenders rather than incarceration. Fifth degree felony offenders are already offered treatment programs, probation and treatment programs, and other local community alternatives to incarceration. Yet time and time again these individuals fail to comply with an opportunity and fail to complete the required programs so they are returned to the county jail to serve the balance of their sentence.

Mandatory T-CAP is not a long term solution to this problem or to addressing prison overcrowding at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Local criminal justice practitioners need the ability to make their own decisions. Judges need the flexibility to determine where and when a convicted fifth degree felony offenders should be housed, including at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Hiring more probation officers to oversee the activities of probationers is not a reasonable long term solution.

Programs that are evidence based and focus on trauma, mental health, substance abuse, life skills, enhanced moral reasoning, better decision making, appropriate beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are just a small example of the type of programming that needs greater development at the state level and then filtered down to the local level through a continuity of care type of program, lessening the failure rate for of these individuals.

### PAST PRESIDENTS CURRENT SHERIFFS

**2019**  
**Matthew J. Lutz**  
Muskingum County

**2018**  
**Michael L. Simpson**  
Preble County

**2017**  
**Mark Wasylshyn**  
Wood County

**2016**  
**Randy Thorp**  
Licking County

**2015**  
**Gene Fischer**  
Greene County

**2013**  
**E. Wayne Risner**  
Ashland County

**2012**  
**Jeff Grey**  
Mercer County

**2007**  
**Vernon P. Stanforth**  
Fayette County

**2004**  
**Michael E. Heldman**  
Hancock County

Mental Health facility bed capacities are inadequate in the State of Ohio. Possibly making funding dollars available to local level mental health providers for the development and implementation of regional inpatient mental health recovery centers would provide for increased mental health bed capacity in best serving those with severe and persistent mental health disorders, who often lack the ability to be successful in treatment and recovery during heightened times of their mental health illness.

Possibly making funding dollars available to local level substance use providers in addressing increased substance use disorder through the development and implementation of regional residential treatment and recovery centers, non-residential treatment and recovery services and programming rather than incarceration.

County jails should be viewed as the last and most costly alternative to prisoner housing. County jails were not and are not able to handle those who have been diagnosed with severe and persistent mental health illness or substance use disorder. County jails were established to house new arrestees, until bail or bond could be posted, pre-trial detainees who are unable to post bail or bond and post trial misdemeanor detainees. County jails were not established to house post trial felony detainees.

In our opinion, mandatory T-CAP is not a good idea, nor is it a long term solution to the issues we face.

Thank you for your consideration and I will try to answer any questions related to my testimony.