



Senate Judiciary  
Committee

Witness Form

Today's Date 1-22-2021

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Organization Representing: Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 2

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: none



Senate Judiciary Committee  
Written Testimony on SB 2

Scott A. Sylak, LICDC  
Executive Director  
Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County  
January 26, 2021

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2. My name is Scott Sylak and I am the Executive Director of the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County.

I am writing in support of SB 2 because we need better tools designed to improve public safety and treatment outcomes for individuals with mental health disorders when they intersect with the criminal justice system. It is my opinion that if used effectively, SB 2 should ensure that Ohio's state psychiatric hospitals are serving patients with the most acute clinical needs while creating a pathway for individuals with mental illness who pose less of a public safety risk to be effectively treated in the community. The preservation of precious state hospital resources for those most in need will not only improve outcomes for some of the most acute individuals in our community, it will also support those individuals diverted to community care while maintaining the ability for an immediate hospitalization if needed.

SB 2 seems to strike a reasonable balance between an individual's right to be treated in the least restrictive environment while maintaining adequate public safety measures. Complex social issues rarely have simple solutions. Senator Gavarone's tenacity in working through the many complexities of this legislation in an attempt to meet individual and community needs is commendable. When passed, we will need to continue to collectively work together as we strive to ensure that all Ohioans are able to access and receive high-quality, culturally competent, and inclusive mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery support services when and where they need them.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Should you have any questions, please contact me at [ssylak@lcmhrsboh.gov](mailto:ssylak@lcmhrsboh.gov).