



SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – Proponent Testimony, SB 36, March 2nd, 2021

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Ohio Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity (AFP). As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the country, AFP is driving long-term solutions to some of the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its thousands of activists across Ohio, are dedicated to breaking barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing or reducing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and by transforming their communities. Accordingly, I urge you to support and favorably report Senate Bill 36.

The facets of AFP's criminal justice reform efforts are numerous, and they include seeing that victims of crime are restored and made as close to whole as possible. SB 36 is a well-intended step in the right direction toward that important goal. One of the most important changes to Ohio law made in the bill is the reduction of the limitations on restitution for individuals who may have previously been convicted of criminal conduct. Though these individuals' past conduct does not change in any way the harm caused by them being the victim of future criminal conduct, the reduction from a ten-year ban to a five-year ban is a step forward, though ideally there would be no barrier to them receiving restitution.

SB 36 also smartly expands the definition of who is a crime victim to include family members who either witnessed a crime or its aftermath, and immediate family members who are caretakers of a dependent victim of sexual assault. The psychological and emotional trauma from tragic criminal incidents can most certainly have a ripple effect beyond the immediate victim, and that ripple effect too often carries with it undesired economic and financial consequences in family units. The fact that these terrible incidents can and do occur in communities across Ohio frequently is a regrettable fact, and therefore it makes sense that state government comes to the aid of the people affected when horrible circumstances transpire. Unexpected, undesired financial strain born out of another person's criminal conduct is indeed an economic barrier, and broadening access to aid for those who truly need and deserve it in these situations is absolutely a role that state government should be playing.

AFP – Ohio would like to commend Chairman Manning and Senator Steve Huffman for reviving this meaningful legislation in the 134th General Assembly. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to offer testimony today. AFP – Ohio supports SB 36 and, on behalf of my organization and our affiliated activists, I urge the members of the committee to favorably report this bill. Thank you.

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.AmericansForProsperity.org.