

May 27, 2021

Dear Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Senator Thomas and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

My name is Douglas Burks and I am a resident living in Norwood, Ohio. I have been a resident of Ohio my whole life and voted in my first election in 1972. I was a college professor at Wilmington College and worked with students doing service projects within the state to help model what good citizenship is. I have voted in every election and have petitioned elected officials about government policy. In my retirement, I am involved in organizations that work to improve civic life in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Senate Bill 182 addresses flaws in our current system that conflict with the United States Constitution. The VIII amendment states: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." Over the past two years I have been a team member that has been observing the courts in Hamilton County. One case I observed illustrates the injustice in our current bond system. A woman who was charged with a crime could not afford the monetary bail she was given and was therefore incarcerated. She had no legal representation at the hearing. While incarcerated her children were put into foster care for there were no family members to care for them. She also lost her job. At her trial, the witness for the prosecution did not show up. She was found innocent for want of prosecution. I believe both she and her children were harmed. Though for most her cash bail would seem reasonable, for her it was excessive. This is true for many indigent citizens of our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 182.

Sincerely,


Douglas J. Burks