

Senate Judiciary Committee
Proponent Testimony
SB 182
Testimony of Angela Dickson
June 16, 2021

Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB 182. This issue is very important to me due to my personal experience with Ohio's bail system. During one of my cases I was given a \$1,000 cash and surety bond, which as an addict and someone in poverty, I couldn't pay. I didn't get any options for the treatment of my addiction throughout my whole stay. If the system was set up to where people that were facing charges for addiction-related crimes would have the opportunity to get out, even if it was on their own recognizance, or bond or low cash bail, then we could seek treatment, or judges could make treatment and option as part of the bail terms.

I have recently completed a treatment program that helped me with everything. If it wasn't for me going to treatment I don't know what would have happened. They helped with housing and group therapy. It taught me a lot about changing my thinking through cognitive behavioral therapy. That's what I've needed for a really long time. By allowing for release from jail pretrial and release hearings within 48 hours, SB 182 gives people with substance issues more options rather than an indefinite jail stay pretrial.

Another one of my concerns with the current bail system is how staying in jail before your trial affects your case. In my experience, I just pleaded guilty to get out and get whatever sentence even though some of the felonies I was being charged with weren't valid. Staying in jail pretrial has major effects on your mental state, and you will do anything to leave jail, including pleading guilty to something you did not do. I even attempted suicide in jail the next day after my OR bond was revoked, because I literally felt like I had no hope. I felt like I was never going to be able to get clean, and I didn't even think about rehab. I've been fighting addiction and been on probation pretty much since I've been 15 years old or younger. Keeping people in jail indefinitely before their trial can be extremely damaging and can hurt their case. This bill would help give people more hope, and not force them to plead guilty just because they want to leave jail.

At the end of the day, with Ohio's current bail system it's only the people who have money can get out and the people who don't, don't. The people who don't have money stay in jail and suffer just because they don't have money. This bill would change this inequality, that is why I urge you to support SB 182. Thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony.

Angela Dickson