

Senate Judiciary Committee
Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 182
Written Testimony Only

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June 13, 2021

Dear Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Cecil Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kate LeVesconte and I am a resident of Greene County. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 182.

There are two primary reasons why I am in support of Senate Bill 182. The first is that the changes proposed will improve the fairness in and reduce the unintended harm caused by our current money bail system. As a psychologist who has worked in the public sector with families of limited means, I am all too aware of how easily an unexpected expense or work interruption can plunge a family into crisis. Research confirms that as little as 3 days of incarceration often causes substantial damage. Pre-trial detention also increases the likelihood of a poor case result including that an individual may plead guilty, irrespective of their actual guilt or innocence, in order to gain their release. Creating a presumption of release except in cases where there is a concern for safety brings our judicial system closer to our ideal of innocent until proven guilty. In contrast, our current system of money bail has created a two-tiered system of justice in which the rich go free and the poor are held.

The second reason I support Senate Bill 182 is that it will save Ohioans a very significant amount of money. The ACLU of Ohio conducted a two-year study of the fiscal implications of bail reform. That study found that by enacting common sense bail reforms, Ohioans could save between \$199 million to \$264 million that we currently spend to incarcerate non-violent people pretrial – while they are still legally innocent. As you know probably better than I, Ohio has many other priorities that could benefit from these savings.

There is also good data indicating that reducing pretrial detention does not compromise public safety or court appearance rates. In Washington D.C., for example, over the past 2 decades, most people are released on their own recognizance. During that time, D.C. has maintained high appearance rates (89%) and has found that 99% of people released are not rearrested pretrial for a violent crime.

In summary, this bill would increase judicial fairness and save significant tax dollars without compromising public safety. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this critically important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.