

Testimony on Senate Bill 182

House State and Local Government Committee

June 15, 2021

Submitted by: Kristine Woodworth

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. My name is Kristine Woodworth. I am a retired small business owner and mother of two grown sons. I live in Ohio Senate District 7, in the city of Cincinnati. I am strongly in favor of SB 182, which would reform Ohio's cruel and racist cash bail system.

When a person is arrested and charged with a crime in our country, they have the presumption of innocence *unless* and until they are found guilty in a court of law. They are not presumed innocent ***unless they are poor***. They are not presumed innocent ***unless they are Black***. Every man, woman and child is presumed innocent, period.

Regardless of this fundamental right, at this exact moment thousands of Ohioans who have not been convicted of a crime sit in jail, simply because they can't afford bail. At the same time, well-off Ohioans accused of the same crime get to pay to go home, where they can go to work and continue their lives while they await their day in court.

By some estimates, more than half of all those in jail at any given time have not been convicted of a crime, meaning that these people are **legally innocent**. While they are incarcerated they can't work, pay bills, or take care of their kids. In effect, the cash bail system criminalizes poverty, as people who are unable to afford bail are detained while they await trial for weeks or even months. Spending even a few days in jail can result in people losing their job, housing, and even custody of their children, which will obviously have devastating long term effects.

Cash bail perpetuates inequities in the justice system that are disproportionately felt by communities of color and those experiencing poverty. Bail reform will help ensure no one is treated differently under the law simply because of their financial status.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote YES on this bipartisan, important, life-changing bill.