



2100 Stella Court
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 252-8402
alvis180.org

Senate Bill 288

Proponent Testimony

Submitted to the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee

By: Denise M. Robinson, President and CEO, Alvis, Inc.

March 1, 2022

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee; I am Denise M. Robinson, **President and CEO of Alvis, Inc.**, a nonprofit human services agency. Alvis provides evidence-informed reentry, workforce development, behavioral health treatment and related services that help individuals successfully transition back to the community and reduce the number of people who recidivate. I have been with Alvis for more than 35 years and have been President and CEO since 2005. I am the **President-Elect of the American Correctional Association (ACA)**, a professional association that champions the cause of corrections and correctional effectiveness and has thousands of members from around the world. I am a Past President of the Ohio Community Corrections Association and a Past President of the International Community Justice Association (formerly the International Community Corrections Association).

This written testimony is submitted in support of Ohio Senate Bill 288, sponsored by Senator Nathan Manning.

Alvis operates programs in Columbus, Chillicothe, Lima and Toledo, Ohio. The Alvis family of services includes: 1) Community and residential **reentry programs** for individuals with criminal justice involvement; 2) Integrated **behavioral healthcare treatment** (substance use and/or mental health disorder treatment); 3) Services for **individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities**; 4) **Workforce development and skills training** programs for individuals with significant barriers to employment; and 5) **Treatment and support programs for families, especially children**, impacted by a loved one's justice involvement and/or behavioral health diagnosis.

Alvis is committed to excellence and quality care to the individuals, families and communities we serve. The Alvis vision is that communities believe **each person's potential is more important than their past**. Our mission is to innovate and deliver evidence-based human services programs that empower those we serve to build successful and productive lives.

Community corrections and treatment programs, such as Alvis, provide individuals who are in the process of transitioning from prison to the community with a supportive environment and services that have been proven to reduce the risk that an individual will recidivate.

Everything we do at Alvis is research-based, evidence-informed and overseen by a range of federal, state, local and/or association licensing, certifying, and accrediting bodies.

Our community corrections and halfway house programs are accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and our behavioral health treatment programs are certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).





2100 Stella Court
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 252-8402
alvis180.org

At Alvis, we take our responsibility to spend taxpayer money wisely and effectively very seriously. We are committed to making the communities we serve safer while strengthening and making individuals and families healthier and more self-sufficient.

It is well established that individuals in the criminal justice system are very likely to have substance use and/or mental health disorders. They require treatment services that will address their healthcare needs. "The substantial prison population in the United States is strongly connected to drug-related offenses...85% of the prison population has an active substance use disorder or were incarcerated for a crime involving drugs or drug use."ⁱ The Brennan Report found that, "**Seventy-nine percent of today's prisoners suffer from either drug addiction or mental illness, and 40% suffer from both.**"ⁱⁱ

Alvis' programs for individuals with justice involvement address a person's assessed treatment needs while also holding the person to a standard of accountability and responsibility. Treatment plans are developed based on the results of each person's score on the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS). Alvis' research-based programs address behavioral health and other issues such as, cognition (patterns of thinking), education, workforce development, and family support needs. **Addressing these needs through programming is proven to reduce recidivism.** "Scientific research since the mid-1970s shows that treatment of those with substance use disorders (SUDs) in the criminal justice system can change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward drug use; avoid relapse; and successfully remove themselves from a life of substance use and crime."ⁱⁱⁱ

One effective tool offered to local jurisdictions by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) **is the transitional control (TC) program** as created under ORC 2967.26. This permits eligible inmates to be transferred to a residential community corrections treatment facility for up to the final 180 days of their sentence under TC status. Administrative rules disqualify sex offenders, offenses of violence, excessive felony convictions, and those serving mandatory sentences from participation in transitional control.

From January 2019 through November 30, 2020, 1,760 individuals (1,254 men and 506 women) came to Alvis through the TC program and stayed an average of 114 days. **While at Alvis, these clients earned \$2,343,063 in wages, enabling them to pay restitution, child support, taxes, and other financial obligations. At the same time, they completed 1,080 hours of treatment programming and 12,904 hours of community service.**

In contrast, inmates whose participation in the TC program is vetoed by a judge will remain in prison for the last 120-180 days of their sentence. Most will then be released directly back into their local community. They will not have the benefit of effective case management and treatment services provided in an environment that stresses personal accountability. They will not be working with professional staff, participating in treatment and workforce development programming, and completing community service hours like the TC clients in Alvis programs. Many may not even be under post release control or have the benefit of criminal justice supervision.

Data suggests that, after applying the ODRC criteria, Ohio is sending the right individuals to the





2100 Stella Court
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 252-8402
alvis180.org

TC program, as evidenced by the low recidivism rate. **Currently, inmates released from Ohio prisons have a recidivism rate of 31%. By placing inmates in the TC Program, the recidivism rate is reduced to 16%.**

In summary, utilizing TC reduces prison crowding, saves money, effectively reduces recidivism, and starts an individual on the path to becoming a law abiding, tax-paying citizen.

Alvis joins with the Ohio Community Corrections Association to support allowing ODRC to have the authority to make administrative transfers including to Transitional Control status.

Thank you for your time. If you have questions, please contact me by email at denise.robinson@alvis180.org or by phone at 614-252-8402.

ⁱNational Institute on Drug Addiction (NIDA), June 2020.

<https://nida.nih.gov/sites/default/files/drugfacts-criminal-justice.pdf>

ⁱⁱ How Many Americans Are Unnecessarily Incarcerated? December 2016.

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-many-americans-are-unnecessarily-incarcerated>

ⁱⁱⁱ How Many Americans Are Unnecessarily Incarcerated? December 2016.

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-many-americans-are-unnecessarily-incarcerated>

