



Senate Bill 288
Proponent Testimony
Submitted to the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
By: Neil Tilow, President and CEO, Talbert House
May 17, 2022

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee; my name is Neil Tilow, President and CEO of Talbert House, a nonprofit agency serving Southwest Ohio. Please accept this testimony in support of Senate Bill 288.

Talbert House was founded in 1965 to help homeless men reenter the community. Today, Talbert House services are offered to a broad-based population with the agency's mission in mind: empowering children, adults and families to live healthy, safe and productive lives. Talbert House helps thousands of men, women and children throughout Southwest Ohio overcome adversity to become healthy and productive citizens.

Our services are based on what is proven to work and are not delivered in a vacuum. In addition to oversight by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, our programs are licensed, certified and accredited by organizations that include the American Correctional Association (ACA) and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Research by the University of Cincinnati and our own Center for Health and Human Services Research bridge research and practice in order to maximize access to high-quality services with proven outcomes for clients, their families and their communities.

As a community corrections provider, we are always looking for ways to balance the need for safety while providing effective treatment for the addiction and mental health issues the majority of those in the criminal justice system suffer. The successful reentry of offenders into community is the cornerstone of reducing recidivism and connecting offenders to treatment and local resources.

Transitional Control has been researched and proven to be an effective reentry program adopted by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) under ORC 2967.26. Transitional Control allows for eligible (those excluded include sex offenders, offenses of violence and those serving mandatory sentences) offenders to be transferred to a community corrections facility for up to the final 180 days of their sentence. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation uses sound judgment in making administrative transfers based on the offense, Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) scores and behavior.

Without the benefit of Transitional Control, offenders are released directly to the community without support or connection to treatment services, stable housing or employment assistance. If they are not under post release control they will return home without any criminal justice supervision.

Recidivism data provides compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the Transitional Control program: Offenders released from Ohio prisons have a recidivism rate of 31%. When offenders complete their sentences through the Transitional Control program, the recidivism rate is reduced to 16%.

Considering the current opioid and coronavirus pandemics, these nonviolent, felony offenders can be treated in community corrections centers safely, with clinical best practice while reducing the prison population struggling with COVID-19.

We, along with the Ohio Community Corrections Association, believe that the use of Transitional Control is cost effective, reduces prison overcrowding, and most importantly, reduces recidivism while connecting offenders to support systems needed to be law abiding, tax-paying citizens.

Talbert House supports allowing ODRC to have the authority to make administrative transfers including to transitional control. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at neil.tilow@talberthouse.org or at (513) 751-7747.