JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

 Witness Form

Today’s Date: 6/12/17

Name: Ezra Foster

Address: 1007 Harrison Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

Telephone: 614-288-3250

Organization Representing: Healing Broken Circles

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 67

Testimony: \_XX\_\_\_ Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Written \_\_\_\_\_ Both

Testifying As: \_\_\_\_\_ Proponent \_XX\_\_\_ Opponent \_\_ \_\_\_ Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_XX\_\_ No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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June 12, 2017

Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, and the Honorable Members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Ezra Foster. I am a formerly incarcerated person and I work as a facilitator with Healing Broken Circles helping run our programs inside the prison and in the community. Healing Broken Circles is an organization that provides opportunities to heal, learn, and thrive for those touched by the justice system.

I am here to speak in opposition to SB 67, a bill that would expand public registration to violent offenders in Ohio.

I do not believe that this bill heads us in the right direction when it comes to promoting public safety and preventing future violent crime.  One recent high profile case involves Brian Golsby, the man who on trial for murdering a young woman near OSU.  This man was on a sex offender registry and on an ankle bracelet at the time of this crime. He is also suspected in a number of other crimes that occurred while on the bracelet. My question is, why are we replicating something that isn’t working in the first place?

I believe that more attention needs to be paid to the prison system itself and the need for true interventions and rehabilitation. Mr. Golsby was not doing the things he was supposed to be doing even when in prison. Someone should have been picking up on that and the system should have been addressing it because he was released and did something even worse than his original crime. There needs to be accountability inside the prison system – the creation of safety for our community starts there. If we work to deal with it after the fact with a registry then we are not getting to the root of the issue.

Finally, I believe the system is already overwhelmed with the sex offender registry.  How much more do you want to overwhelm them? It is a lot of work to maintain and costs money and staff time that could be better used elsewhere.

I hope that you will focus on helping people while they are incarcerated.  We must work to deter crime at the start of incarceration and provide supervision and support for people when they get out. This is a better way forward.

Thank you,

Ezra Foster

Healing Broken Circles