



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

House Bill 403 Proponent Testimony

Submitted to the Ohio House Criminal Justice Subcommittee
By: Denise M. Robinson, President and CEO, Alvis, Inc.
December 2020

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee; I am Denise M. Robinson, President and CEO of Alvis, a nonprofit human services agency. For more than 50 years, Alvis has been providing research-based reentry and related services that help individuals successfully transition back to our communities after spending time in the criminal justice system. I have been with Alvis for 36 years and have been President and CEO for the past 15 years. I am also the President-Elect of the American Correctional Association (ACA), an association with a 150-year tradition of supporting corrections practitioners, accrediting correctional programs, and promoting correctional effectiveness.

Today, I am testifying in support of the Transitional Control (TC) program and House Bill 403, sponsored by Representatives Hillyer and Galonski.

Alvis operates programs in Columbus, Dayton, Chillicothe, Lima and Toledo, Ohio. Our service lines are: 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 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 service programs that empower those we serve to build successful and productive lives.

Community corrections 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 safer while strengthening and making individuals and families healthier and more self-sufficient.

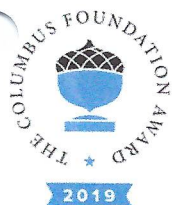
It is well established that individuals in the justice system are very likely to have substance abuse and/or mental health treatment needs. “The substantial prison population in the United States is strongly connected to drug-related offenses...85% of the prison population has an active substance use 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’ research-based programs address behavioral health and other issues, cognition, education, workforce development, and family support needs. They are **proven** to reduce recidivism.

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 community corrections 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.

In the past two years (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, participating in 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.





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

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

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.

ⁱ Center on Addiction, Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population, February 2010. <https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/behind-bars-ii-substance-abuse-and-america-s-prison-population>

ⁱⁱ How Many Americans Are Unnecessarily Incarcerated? December 2016. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-many-americans-are-unnecessarily-incarcerated>



House Bill 403
Proponent Testimony
Submitted to the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee
By: Kirk Shenay, December 2020

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee; I am Kirk Shenay, a Cognitive Behavioral Specialist at Alvis, Inc., a nonprofit human services agency in Ohio. I am also a Certified CDCA (Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant) and I am a past participant of the Transitional Control (TC) program.

Today, I am testifying in support of the Transitional Control (TC) program and House Bill 403, sponsored by Representatives Hillyer and Galonski.

As a Cognitive Behavioral Specialist at Alvis, my role is to facilitate group treatment sessions designed to help our clients to change the way they think, which helps them to change the way they act. Cognitive behavioral treatment has been proven to be effective in reducing the likelihood that an individual will recidivate (return to the justice system after committing a new crime or serious violation of the terms of release).

Alvis provides reentry services, substance abuse and mental health treatment services, and workforce development services in Ohio that are designed to help individuals successfully reenter the community after spending time in the justice system. The agency also provides family support services and services to individuals with developmental disabilities. I work at the Alvis location on South Front Street in Columbus, Ohio. I have been working here for a year and a half now. I truly love what I do and have a passion for those who have been written off or deemed unsuitable for society.

This is because at one point, I was in their shoes and had the same thoughts my clients now have. No, I wasn't always a man driven to help individuals change and to try to find the words that can potentially unlock the purpose laying dormant in the lives of those I work with and encourage every day.

I spent six years of my life behind bars. These were a period when a great transformation took place. I began to look at my thinking and evaluated my life. What I realized is the person I valued so much was the same person that got me six years of my life incarcerated.

I began to change the man I valued and saw in the mirror from the inside out. I broke off the chains of the prisoner "street mentality" mindset and began to redefine what was valuable to me. This helped me to unlock potential that had lain dormant in me all my life. I had a mentor, a man of God whom I walked with for the last two years of my incarceration. He instilled in me and taught me principles that changed my thinking forever.

As a person on Transitional Control status, I was able to come to the Alvis halfway house more than five years ago to complete my sentence. I am very grateful that the Transitional Control program allowed me time to adjust to being back in the community.

Being at Alvis was truly a blessing. I had the opportunity to learn how to create a resume, obtain job skills training, and learn how to conduct myself in an interview. I was also employed and worked two jobs, one as a janitor at a gym, and the other as a cook.

The biggest blessing for me was how much Alvis helped me when it came to getting custody of my son. My son was taken from me by Children's Services while I was incarcerated. When I got out on Transitional Control status, Alvis provided so many resources to make it possible for me to get out and get custody of my son. My case manager even worked with the case worker from Children's Services to make it possible for me to be able to spend time with my son so we could begin building a relationship. Because of this help, I was able to get custody of my son upon completing the Alvis program.

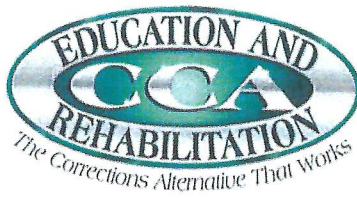
One man who was really a blessing to me was Harry Cox, the Cognitive Behavioral Specialist at Alvis assigned to work with me during my time on Transitional Control. I would tell him, "One day I'm going to sit were you sit," and he encouraged me to continue down this path and doors would open for me.

Today I am sitting in that seat that I had promised so many I would. The door that came open was from the hand of the man who encouraged me to stay on the path. I am currently in college and now voluntarily go into prisons to speak to people who are in the same position I once was. I teach the Bible and how to get free from drugs and the lies that have created a path to destruction for the people who are currently in prison.

While I was on Transitional Control, Alvis equipped me with tools to be successful and encouraged me to not just have a "Get Out Plan" but also a "Stay Clean Plan." Today, as a Cognitive Behavioral Specialist at Alvis, I teach these concepts and many others in my cognitive behavioral treatment groups. Some of the individuals I teach have been in prison for as little as 12 months, whereas others have spent an extensive amount of time behind bars. Both from my personal and professional experience, I can see how much good it does for people to have time in a halfway house before they fully transition back to the community.

I hope you vote to remove barriers that may prevent people from being able to participate in the Transitional Control program that was so beneficial to me. I am so thankful for the opportunity to have gone through the Alvis program as part of my release on Transitional Control. It was such a blessing then and it continues to this day, as I am thankful to be a part of an organization that is turning lives around every day.

If you have questions, please contact me at Kirk Shenay, c/o Alvis, Inc., 40 W. Long Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215 or by email at Kirk.Shenay@alvis180.org.



David J. Stillwagon
Chief Executive Officer

December 4, 2020

Representative George Lang
Chairman, House Criminal Justice Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

OFFICERS:

Ian Beniston
Chairperson
Robert Rupeka
Vice Chairperson
Charles Baldwin
Secretary
Harry Wollet
Treasurer
Scott Schulick
Corresponding Sec.

Support for H.B. 403

Dear Chairman Lang,

I hope this letter finds you well. Please accept this written correspondence as formal support for House Bill 403. Community Corrections Association, Inc. (CCA) has a long history of serving men and women transitioning from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC) through the Transitional Control (TC) program.

The TC program is the most successful program administered by ODRC to safely and effectively transition individuals to a licensed halfway house. CCA engages TC placements in evidence-based programming which aims to change their criminal thinking ultimately reducing the recidivism rate. In addition, TC placements receive substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational planning necessary to successfully assist their re-entry. Participants work with our professional staff to build the necessary skills to obtain and retain employment. While in the program TC placements pay taxes, restitution, child support and start to save and plan for their future.

CCA's halfway houses have existing capacity to serve Transitional Control placements at no additional cost to the state. We hope that the committee will support the passage of House Bill 403 and am happy to discuss with you any questions that may arise.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

David J. Stillwagon
Chief Executive Officer

**MEMBERS-
AT-LARGE:**

Germaine Bennett
Guy Burney
Ray Butler
Sharon Letson
Sarra Mohn

**COMMUNITY
CORRECTIONS
ASSOC., INC.**

507 Market Street
Youngstown, OH 44507
Phone: (330) 744-5143
Fax: (330) 742-8661

- Established 1974 -

Nationally Accredited by the American Correctional Association.
Licensed by the Ohio Dept. of Corrections and the Federal Prison Systems.
Certified by the Ohio Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services.



**COMMUNITY RESTORATION CENTERS
OF STARK COUNTY**

HOPE. COMPASSION. CHARITY. RESPONSIBILITY.



Representative George Lang
Chairman, House Criminal Justice Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

December 7, 2020

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Dear Chairman Lang,

Please accept this written correspondence as formal support for House Bill 403. Our facilities take women and men who have been involved with the criminal justice system. This is work that my family has been doing for two generations. One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is to see formerly addicted persons become self-sufficient by getting treatment, gaining employment, and restoring their families.

Transitional Control (TC) is a very successful program administered by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections to transfer eligible inmates into programming. We connect them with local resources and treatment options and effectively reduce recidivism rates across Ohio.

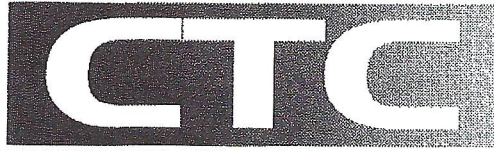
Our halfway houses have existing capacity to take additional numbers of TC placements at no additional cost to the state. We urge the committee to support passage of House Bill 403 and I remain as a resource to your committee should there be any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Be well!

Best,

Chandra Bryant,
Community Restoration Centers of Stark County, Inc.

CRCSTARK.ORG



COMMUNITY TRANSITION CENTER
"Providing a positive choice to Southeastern Ohio"

Representative George Lang
Chairman, Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee
District 52
77 South High Street, 13th floor
Columbus, OH 43215

December 7, 2020

Dear Chairman Lang,

I would like to go on record in support of House Bill 403. Community Transition Center serves central and southern Ohio by operating a transitional control (TC) program for male inmates serving out the last 6 months of their sentence in the community. Upon finding a job, we maintain part of the person's wages to reinvest in the state program, pay any court obligations and keep the balance to return to successful completers when they leave.

Every time someone leaves for work, home visits, or doctor's appointments they are screened for drugs and alcohol when they return. Our staff have social work, substance use disorder, and mental health credentials to address any underlying issues that have caused relapse or recidivism.

For persons who are non-compliant, have extreme physical or mental health needs or go AWOL, they are revoked to the state prisons as they are still considered inmates under the purview and control of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). Those who successfully complete have better outcomes than others who did not get the benefit of the TC program.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please call Lusanne Green at (614) 378-9808 with the Ohio Community Corrections Association, our trade association, with any detailed questions about the bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Beck". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name "Jill".

Jill

- NEW HOPE RECOVERY CORPS
- ZELMA GEORGE FAMILY SHELTER
- COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS
- ALCOHOL & DRUG ADDICTION SERVICES
- PASS TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM

THE SALVATION ARMY Harbor Light Complex

1710 Prospect Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Phone (216) 781-3773 • Fax (216) 781-9535

BRIAN PEDDLE
GENERAL

WILLIAM A. BAMFORD
TERRITORIAL COMMANDER

ARTHUR B. HILL III - BEAU
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My name is Arthur B. Hill III - Beau, a 4th generation Salvationist and employee of The Salvation Army nearly 25 years. As Executive Director of The Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex in Cleveland Ohio, I manage a host of programming including an emergency shelter for homeless families, transitional housing for homeless men, a residential sub-acute detox center and halfway house for those involved in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for allowing me to speak before the committee. I support HB 403 to adjust the language regarding Transitional Control.

In the programs we administer as The Salvation Army, most of our clients struggle with substance abuse, homelessness, mental health and cognitive challenges. Our charge is to address those issues so that the individual can overcome those challenges and lead productive lives.

Through my tenure at The Salvation Army it has become evident that an individual's willingness to change is paramount. We also know that providing the right intervention at the right time increases the likelihood of the client being responsive and improves results. This is the core principle being addressed with Transitional Control.

Often times when we talk about budget, research and programs what is overlooked is the person that is impacted.

Allowing the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to administratively transfer someone with a prison sentence to a Halfway House makes sense as those individuals have been screened by DRC. The screening out includes those with a Sex Offense, history of challenges within the institution and who do not want the opportunity of TC.

While every individual does not successfully complete Transitional Control, those who create challenges in the Halfway House can be immediately remanded back to prison.

The University of Cincinnati research notes that the use of Transitional Control is the most effective program in the Department in reducing recidivism. I believe that it is the convergence of the effectiveness of the programming along with the client's knowledge of the potential to head back to prison that make it effective.

Transitional Control provides a safe landing, or parachute so to speak, into the community and having more people access this programming allows them the opportunity to reintegrate more effectively, thereby making our communities safer.

Arthur B. Hill III - Beau

Executive Director

HARBOR LIGHT IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION & CORRECTION, OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY, ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY, CLEVELAND DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CUYAHOGA COUNTY & THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, DISABILITY, AGE & SEXUAL ORIENTATION
THE SALVATION ARMY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



November 23, 2020

Dear Ohio Lawmaker,

On behalf of Right on Crime, I want to thank you for your continued visionary leadership that has helped Ohio emerge as a national leader in fostering both public safety and second chances.

The Right on Crime initiative (www.RightOnCrime.com) provides principled and proven conservative solutions that reduce crime, lower costs and restore victims. This national initiative is housed at the Texas Public Policy Foundation and was formed in partnership with Prison Fellowship and the American Conservative Union. More than 50 conservative leaders have endorsed Right on Crime's Statement of Principles, including Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry, Ken Cuccinelli, Jeb Bush, Grover Norquist, Ken Blackwell, and Ed Meese.

I write to share with you why we think Transitional Control (TC) veto reform is an important priority for Ohio. Senators Manning and Sykes have sponsored Senate Bill 377 and Representatives Hillyer and Galonski sponsored House Bill 403, both bills aim to make more efficient the transition from prison to the community. The Transitional Control program is a statutory transfer of eligible inmates identified by ODRC. About half of eligible offenders were vetoed from participation by their sentencing judges.

Right on Crime believes in public safety first. Transitional control program completers have the lowest recidivism rate of any DRC administered program. Right on Crime also advocates for fiscal responsibility. Using TC would save the state about \$2.5M per budget cycle while also generating income taxes, restitution, and subsistence payments that are reinvested in the state's general revenue fund.

Of course, we all know incarceration is necessary in some cases, but too often the outcomes (broken families, revolving prison doors, lack of resources for programs in penal settings) do not measure up to the high cost of prisons. Here, we have a program that works and we should utilize it to its fullest potential. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc L." in a cursive style.

Marc Levin, Esq.

Chief of Policy & Innovation, Right on Crime

(512) 472-2700, (713) 906-1833 cell

mlevin@texaspolicy.com



House Bill 403
Proponent Testimony
Submitted to the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee
By: Neil Tilow, President and CEO, Talbert House
December 2020

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice 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 House Bill 403, sponsored by Representatives Hillyer and Galonski.

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 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.