

House Criminal Justice Committee
Opponent Testimony
House Joint Resolution 2
Written Testimony Only

Stephen Demuth, PhD
Associate Professor of Sociology
Bowling Green State University

April 6, 2022


Dear Chairman LaRe, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is Stephen Demuth, and I live in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am a professor at Bowling Green State University whose expertise includes the effectiveness and consequences of money bail and pretrial detention. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony **opposing House Joint Resolution 2**.

I oppose HJR 2 because it doubles down on the failed status quo of money bail rather than meeting Ohioans' needs. A sizeable body of empirical research shows the following:

1. Secured money bail is no more effective than unsecured bail or non-monetary conditions of release at promoting appearance in court.
2. Secured money bail is no more effective than unsecured bail or non-monetary conditions of release at promoting public safety.
3. The use of secured money bail increases pretrial detention because defendants who are unable to afford secured money bail (and thus, would remain detained prior to trial) would be eligible and able to obtain prompt release if the jurisdiction relied instead on unsecured bond or non-monetary conditions of release.
4. Black and Latino arrestees are more likely to be detained pretrial than similarly-situated White arrestees primarily because of a greater inability to "make bail" among non-white arrestees.
5. Pretrial detention has severe negative consequences for people who are detained and for the community, including (1) increasing the likelihood of a defendant receiving a greater punishment and higher court fees; (2) increasing the likelihood of wrongful convictions; (3) increasing the likelihood of unemployment and future crime; and (4) increasing the cost of jailing individuals both pretrial and after conviction, to the extent a longer sentence is likely.

This Committee already has meaningful, evidence-based bail reform legislation before it—House Bill 315. House Bill 315 makes our communities safer by giving courts and prosecutors tools to protect public safety while at the same time ending the wealth-based detention that harms so many of our neighbors. Ohioans like me do not want or need HJR 2, and I urge you to vote no if given the opportunity to vote on it. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.


Stephen Demuth, PhD