



CRIME SURVIVORS FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Good morning Chair LaRe, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent for House Bill 699. My name is Haleigh Young. I have previously testified before the legislature as a human trafficking survivor. I am also a member of Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (CSSJ) a network of over 5,000 diverse crime survivors in Ohio.

As a survivor and social worker, I've experienced and witnessed the impact that trauma can have on an individual's life. Mental health, substance use, continuing cycles from generations before us, and an ongoing list too long to cover. Trauma is by no means an excuse for poor choices, but maybe it does provide some understanding and explanation. A saying I've heard repeated over and over at CSSJ is hurt people hurt people and healing people heal people.

To create stronger, safer communities, we have to help people heal from their experiences and break cycles of trauma and violence. The only way people can heal is by receiving the services they need to do so. Individuals who are incarcerated are often victims and survivors of trauma themselves. In the county where I live, they conducted a study on youth involved with the juvenile justice system. Over 90 percent of the youth involved with the justice system also had some previous involvement with Children Services.

I support House Bill 699 and the improvements it will make to transitional control, expanding earned credit, and judicial release. As a survivor of child abuse and human trafficking, I believe that incarcerated individuals should be held accountable. I also believe they should have access to training, treatment, and education that will help make them productive citizens upon their release and keep them from returning to prison in the future. Most individuals, whether incarcerated or not, need incentives in addition to consequences to balance the negative and positive aspects of life.

The transitional control program provides balance by offering individuals treatment and workforce development programs that they otherwise might not receive while serving their sentences. Expanding the earned credit program would encourage individuals to actively participate in their own rehabilitation by completing programs to earn time off their sentence. Judicial release also encourages individuals to take advantage of programming because it is one of the major considerations for judicial release. All of these improvements focus on rehabilitation and healing instead of punishment and also promote success outside of the criminal justice system.

I encourage you to look at the success of programs like Family Treatment Court and Catch Court in Springfield. These programs still require accountability, but they also give people the services, tools, and support they need to heal, grow, and change. To heal cycles of generational



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trauma, substance use, and even violence, we have to heal the people who have lived it so that they don't continue passing it on. Promoting healing and rehabilitation makes prisons and communities safer.

Too often victims' and survivors' voices are lost during the criminal justice process. Even the name of the case is the state versus the defendant, not the victim versus the defendant. Our voices get lost in the pursuit of what is considered justice for us and decisions are made without us. As a survivor, I understand that most incarcerated individuals return to their communities and, as a survivor, I would rather incarcerated individuals come home with tools, education, and skills that will help end cycles than come home with nothing at all. Passing this bill promotes healing and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals, decreasing the likelihood of them re-offending. It also helps make communities safer for current and future generations by helping to end cycles of trauma, substance use, and violence. Hurt people hurt people and healing people heal people.

Again, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of House Bill 699.

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