



**Representative Terrence Upchurch
20th House District**

HB 221 Sponsor Testimony

Thank you, Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, for allowing me to present sponsor testimony for HB 221.

House Bill 221 would allow post-conviction relief based on DNA evidence. It is imperative that our justice system allows those that may have been wrongfully convicted to plead their case, and this bill expands their ability to do so.

HB 221 would allow those who may be currently serving time for a wrongful conviction to file a petition and expands the current law in 3 ways. The most important one, in my opinion, is it would allow for DNA testing to be performed at the request of or on behalf of the petitioner, as well as any government entity, including the State.

Under current law, posttrial DNA evidence can only be considered at the defendant's discretion and most offenders are not aware that THEY have to request the testing for it to be admissible during trial. Ohio must have systems in place to address new evidence that reveals the innocence of the convicted and not use loopholes and technicalities to keep the innocent imprisoned. My joint sponsor told the story of Tony, and we have several other innocent men in our State that are serving time for no reason.

It is imperative that we fix this issue in our justice system. This bill will have a positive impact on my district in Cleveland as well as the state of Ohio as a whole. Thank you for your consideration and I will be happy to answer any questions

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