



# DAVE YOST

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

Policy & Legislation

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House Criminal Justice Committee  
Corey Jordan, Director of Policy & Legislation

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 289 today. My name is Corey Jordan, and I am the Director of Policy and Legislation for the Ohio Attorney General's Office (AGO) here today testifying on behalf of Attorney General Yost.

House Bill 289 at its core is about keeping our communities safe by strengthening the reporting requirements under Ohio's Sex Offender Registration and Notification (SORN) laws. Convicted sex offenders must spend a designated amount of time on the sex offender registry depending on the crime committed. During their time on the registry, offenders have a duty to comply with certain reporting requirements, such as notifying local law enforcement of intent to reside, or designating their place of work. It was recently brought to our office's attention through the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (the entity that maintains the SORN Registry) that there are approximately 500 individuals who have fallen out of compliance with Ohio's SORN laws due to failure to comply with reporting requirements. This number fluctuates over the course of a year, as in 2022, we designated over 1400 offenders as noncompliant, and with less than a month to go in 2023, we have designated over 2400 offenders as noncompliant with reporting requirements.

While current law assigns penalties for failing to report, concerningly, the time that a noncompliant offender must spend on the registry continues ticking down while the offender is noncompliant. This lapse can result in offenders who spend the majority of their time on the registry in noncompliant status being removed from the registry once the original time assigned is complete. House Bill 289 addresses this problem by tolling the amount of time an offender is noncompliant, until the offender regains compliant status. This provision will satisfy the purpose of the SORN laws and maintain safer communities.

We were made aware of concerns raised by interested parties regarding a provision originally included in House Bill 289 proposing the addition of a SORN registration requirement to the offense of "disseminating matter harmful to juveniles." As such, we have worked in consultation with stakeholders on amendment language to remove this provision from the bill to avoid tying the hands of prosecutors as they seek to strike the balance of justice with potential juvenile



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offenders. While we stand by the initial goal of this aspect of the bill, the AGO is supportive of the removal of this provision.

In conclusion, House Bill 289 shores up Ohio's SORN reporting laws and keeps our communities safe. I'd like to thank the sponsors, Representative Robb-Blasdel and Representative Swearingen for their leadership in bringing this legislation forward. Chair Abrams, members of the committee, thank you again for allowing me to give proponent testimony. I'll be happy to take any questions from the committee at this time.