



HB 196 PROPONENT TESTIMONY, HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE 4.3.24

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, and Ranking Member Brown, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony for HB 196. My name is Hannah Kubbins and I am the Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity – Ohio (AFP). One of our foundational beliefs is that everybody in society has something to contribute, including ex-offenders working to reintegrate into society. We believe enacting laws that help individuals successfully reenter after serving their time benefits the individual, the workforce, and the community.

HB 196 rightfully places an emphasis on rehabilitation over incarceration by making commonsense reforms to our community control structure. The existing system of community control permits unnecessarily long probation sentences for low-risk offenders which causes an increased burden to the taxpayer and a drain on resources for our corrections system. Further, the longer someone is under community control, the likelihood of committing a technical violation increases, which can lead to added time under community control. Increasing the length of a community control sentences due to a technical violation, which would essentially be a procedural violation, puts the offender’s job and livelihood at risk while continuing to increase the cost to the taxpayer.

Per Rep. Seitz’s sponsor testimony, judges currently have broad sentencing discretion regarding community control. This creates an arbitrariness of sentencing based on where the crime was committed. In other words, two offenders in different counties who commit similar crimes will see significantly different sentences.

HB 196 allows for a community control sentence that is flexible and tailored to the offender. This tailored approach will be accomplished by the creation of a mandatory judicial review after the offender has completed two years of their community control sentence for F3/F4/F5 offenses with a strong presumption of early termination unless the court finds clear and convincing evidence that termination and discharge pose a risk or danger to the victim or the community.

This bill strikes a smart balance between removing barriers to reintegration and ensuring communities feel safe. We thank Rep. Seitz and Rep. Williams for their work on this bill and to the committee for providing the opportunity to provide proponent testimony. We look forward to future discussions on HB 196 and other proposed commonsense criminal justice reform initiatives.