

Opponent Testimony HB289

Chairperson Abrams, Vice Chairperson Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, my name is John Fillinger and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to this bill.

This legislation seeks to address a problem that has yet to be quantified, much less identified as a significant risk to public safety. According to the Ohio Legislative Service Commission (OLSC), there are typically around 500 noncompliant offenders on the state's sex offender registry on any given day. However, that figure fluctuates day by day as offenders fall in and out of compliance. It is also important to note that those numbers also include Tier III offenders who are not affected by the bill's tolling provisions. So, out of the roughly 10,000 citizens on the Registry, there are less than 500, perhaps a lot less than 500, who are noncompliant on a daily basis.

The OLSC also states in its Fiscal Note & Impact Statement that the BCI will incur significant one-time costs to modify the SORN system so that sheriffs can enter tolling information. It also notes that software updates will represent unknown future costs.

The Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association suggests that potentially longer registration periods will dramatically increase registration, notification, and enforcement work for many sheriff's offices.

This bill does not identify a significant public safety risk that would be mitigated by its passage, nor does it provide justification for the significant expenditures in time and money required for its implementation and ongoing application. The citizens of Ohio would be better served if the Assembly took a rational look at the effectiveness of the Registry and considered the reforms recommended by the American Law Institute and the Ohio Criminal Justice Recodification Committee.