



**State Representative
Adam Miller**

**Remarks to House Finance Committee Regarding HB 259
(As Prepared) October 4, 2023**

Thank you Chair Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney.

I also want to thank my friend and co-sponsor, Rep. Jean Schmidt. This is a true bipartisan effort.

The bill before us today could be the most important and lasting piece of legislation for this General Assembly.

Keeping our people safe is one of the primary responsibilities and a sacred duty of the government and I know that the lawmakers here in this room take that responsibility very seriously.

However, the death penalty has never been proven to keep us safe or deter crime. Yet, as Rep. Schmidt pointed out, we continue to waste millions of taxpayer dollars on a system that serves no one.

In 2012, over a decade ago, the prestigious National Research Council reviewed more than three decades of research and concluded that there is no credible evidence that the death penalty deters crime. And furthermore, since the time of that report, no credible evidence has emerged to its deterrent effect.

There is evidence that the death penalty has the opposite effect.

Murder rates are consistently higher in states with the death penalty, and there is no evidence that it serves to protect our law enforcement officers.

That's why it's time to focus on investing in policies that prevent crime in the first place, instead of responding afterwards.

Providing people with the resources they need to lead stable and productive lives can reduce the likelihood that they will turn to crime in the first place.

Lastly, we have been wrong 11 times – so far. 11 people on death row have been exonerated. 11 innocent people. 11 families.

11 people wrongfully dead at the hands of the people.

For every five people Ohio has executed, one has been exonerated from death row. In short, the death penalty is a failed public policy.

It is an expensive, time-consuming, and ineffective means of reducing crime rates,

and it disproportionately affects marginalized communities particularly people of color.

That is why we are before this committee. We just don't want to end a faulty system. We want to ensure that victims get the help and support they need.

The certainly don't get it with the Death Penalty – waiting decades for a sentence to be carried out – if ever.

This bill includes an appropriation to the Victims of Crime Fund.

The Crime Fund Victims injured as result of violent crime.

Dependents of homicide victims.

Claimants responsible for crime victims' expenses, such as parents or guardians

It can be used for counseling, wages lost because of the crime, health care, financial support of dependents, and other efforts to make the victim whole.

In recent years, state and federal funding that support this program have been declining.

We correct that with this bill.

It's time we move Ohio forward. It is 2023. It is time to end the death penalty