

House Finance Committee/ Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Bill 259
Written Testimony Only

Rev. MiMi Chamberlin

October 9, 2023

Dear Chairman Edward, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is MiMi Chamberlin and I am a resident of the City of Cincinnati. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio House Bill 259.

I have been against the use of the death penalty for my entire adult life since learning about it in college in the 1980s. I was shocked to learn then and now that the US stands alongside repressive regimes like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt in executing its own citizens.

I had a button, that I have kept with me over the years, that said '*why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing is wrong?*' The death penalty is not a deterrent and it is an injustice to all of us. As an ordained United Church of Christ minister, I believe each person has value and dignity – no matter what they have done. Jesus denounced capital punishment in his day. He challenged those without sin to throw the first stone and urges any of us who seek to exact revenge or retribution to love our enemies.

I also am sickened by racial disparity in our criminal justice system. While people of color make up less than 15% of Ohio's population, they make up 56% of Ohio's death row, 33% of those executed, and 72% of those exonerated. And I am heartbroken to know that Ohioans have been wrongly convicted and executed.

Finally, on a practical level the financial costs to Ohio and Ohioans is too great, and the moral cost is infinitely higher and unrecoverable.

I ask you to consider my testimony and I hope and pray that you will vote yes on this critically important bill and end the barbaric practice in Ohio, once and for all.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.