

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 10/9/23

Name: Richard CLARK

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable):

Position/Title:

Address: 2145 WEST 12th ST

City: Cleveland State: OH Zip: 44113

Best Contact Telephone: 216-644-5341 Email: RCLARK@JCU.EDU

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 259

Specific Issue: Repeal Death Penalty

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you testifying: In-Person Written-Only

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

I AM IN FAVOR OF REPEALING the Death Penalty

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

BILL NUMBER HB 259 – Proponent of Repeal

Written Testimony Only

October 9, 2023

Richard Clark
2145 West 18th Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

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

My name is Richard Clark and I am a resident of Cleveland. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio House Bill 259. I am writing to ask you to support HB 259, a bill to abolish the death penalty in Ohio.

I would like you to consider the following facts.

1. Based upon data from 1973 through 2013, (Capital Punishment in the United States, 2014 Bureau of Justice Statistics) only 16% of individuals sentenced to death are actually executed. Forty-three percent were removed from death row due to being resentenced, conviction overturned etc., and 6% died of suicide, murder, or natural causes. That left approximately 35% still on death row. During this time period, a prisoner was three times more likely to leave death row for reasons other than execution. With the recent decline in executions, this number must be higher.
2. Since 1973, the start of the modern death penalty era, 195 individuals have been released from death row to due to exonerations. Eleven of these individuals were from Ohio.
3. For those executed nationally, the average elapsed time from death sentence to execution now approaches 20 years. According to the 2022 Attorney Generals report on the Death Penalty in Ohio, the average time between sentencing and the setting of an execution date in Ohio is approaching 21 years.
4. The cost of the death penalty is exorbitant. Attorney General Yost has estimated the cost of a death sentence is between one and three million dollars. With only 16% of those sentenced to death actually executed, the cost of an actual execution must be significantly higher. I would ask you to consider what else could we do with this money, including perhaps hiring more police officers or simply returning the money to the taxpayers.
5. There is a human cost to putting a human being to death. Someone must prepare the chemicals, someone must strap the individual to the gurney, and someone must start to process of the actual execution. Deliberate killing a human being is never easy. Research has suggested that many of the correctional officers who participate in executions suffer psychological trauma and PTSD.
6. I would ask you to consider the implications of the above facts. We have an expensive procedure that takes over 20 years to come to fruition; within the time frame noted above it succeeds in its stated goal only 16% of the time; and causes mental and psychological trauma for those who participate in the process. Could you name any other government program you would support that cost so much, fails so often, and traumatizes those who participate in it?

In conclusion, I respectfully ask you to support HB 259 and repeal the death penalty in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Clark.