

Senate Judiciary Committee

Senate Bill 101

Written Testimony Only

Shannon Hughes

November 14, 2023

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Shannon Hughes and I am a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 101.

I believe in the dignity of each human person. Since 1973, more than 195 death row inmates have been exonerated of all charges and released, and with that many exonerees. Ohio is home to 11 death row exonerees who collectively spent 216 years incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. For every five people the state of Ohio has executed, one has been found innocent. This kind of mistake is far too frequent when human lives are at stake.

As I have listened to different accounts of people whose lives have been impacted by the death penalty – exonerees, murder victims' family members, family members of death row inmates, and members of the criminal penal system, I am struck by how many members of our society are harmed by our barbaric practice of state-sponsored killing. Each of our humanity is diminished by participating in a system that puts people to death – killing people to show that killing people is wrong.

As of today, 24 states plus Washington D.C. have cut ties with the death penalty. Ohio can and should be the next. I am thrilled for us to take this step together away from violence and toward a more just society.