

Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Bill 101
Written Testimony Only

Thomas Oddo
November 12, 2023

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

My name is Tommy, and I am a resident of Mentor, Ohio. Thank you so much for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 101.

I firmly believe in the dignity of human life, and I hold this value with conviction. I also believe in a morally and fiscally responsible state. In that vein, I'm writing with my wholehearted support for abolishing the death penalty in Ohio.

This practice is not representative of Ohioan values. For example, the death penalty puts innocent people in harm's way, sentencing innocent people 20% of the time and consistently traumatizing death row workers. Capital punishment has proven ineffective as a deterrent for crime too; states that employ the death penalty actually see higher murder rates. In fact, similar states to Ohio like Michigan — which abolished the death penalty before the Civil War — do not show worse crime rates or worse levels of victim satisfaction.

More, this practice is wasteful. Many prosecutors are overzealous in spending millions each case trying to get a death sentence, but jurors do not offer the death penalty 98% of the time. Taxpayers face this burden most: death penalty cases cost 3-10x more money than any other type of criminal prosecution case. This bill stands to eliminate that waste and alleviate the human toll the practice takes on the state.

Now is the time to pass this SB101 and get this done. Over 59% of Ohioans polled by the Tarrance Group support repealing the death penalty, and 24 states plus Washington D.C. have already cut ties with it. With this popular support, let's follow suit and protect innocent lives, save tax dollars, and channel that money to supporting victims of crime.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this critical bill. Thank you again for your time, your efforts, and the opportunity to testify today.

Thomas Oddo