

Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Bill 101
Written Testimony Only

Jan Wiebe
Monday, November 13, 2023

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

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

For the past 14 years, I have been a penpal with Kenny Smith, who sits on death row in Ohio. Visiting with Kenny and writing to him regularly, I have gotten to know him as a kind, considerate person. He was addicted to drugs at the time of his crime, and he is now a changed person. If you knew Kenny, I'm confident that you would find it unjust and tragic to execute him.

A recent statewide opinion poll in Ohio by the Tarrance Group found that 59% of those surveyed support replacing the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole. In addition to the moral problems with state executions, legal fees with the death penalty are extremely costly. The most rigorous cost study in the country found that a single death sentence costs almost \$2 million more than a comparable non-death penalty case.

Last year, I had dinner with 3 men who were wrongly convicted and who spent decades on death row for crimes they did not commit. Since 1973, 195 former death row prisoners have been exonerated from all charges that landed them on death row. **For every five people the state of Ohio has executed, one has been found innocent.** This kind of mistake is egregious when human lives are at stake. It's time to join the other 23 States in our country and end the death penalty.

Please consider my testimony and vote YES on this important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jan Wiebe
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