

PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 288

Mark Griffin
Law Director
City of Cleveland
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Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee – thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony regarding the portions of Senate Bill 288 addressing the sealing of offenses involving low-level controlled substances.

Senate Bill 288 would allow and clarify that Ohio prosecutors have standing to apply to a sentencing court to seal the record of an individual convicted of such minor low-level offenses.

The City of Cleveland applauds this proposed change.

Currently, the City of Cleveland is working with grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders, and activists to educate individuals on initiating the sealing and expungement process so they can clear their records and remove barriers to employment, education, and quality housing.

But Senate Bill 288 would provide another tool for communities such as Cleveland by expanding efforts to give individuals a second chance to improve their lives. By allowing and clarifying that prosecutors may initiate the sealing process, thousands of individuals in Cleveland alone could receive a fresh start by eliminating a barrier to securing a good job or accessing an education essential in joining tomorrow's workforce. Not only would this legislation improve the quality of life for many of our residents, it also would strengthen our community by giving people an opportunity to build their own success stories here in Cleveland.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this critical provision in Senate Bill 288. And we appreciate the willingness of Chair Manning to work with us on helping to give people another chance to build better lives for themselves and their families.

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