

Chairman Grendell and members of the Senate Judiciary-Criminal Justice Committee, my name is Bud Potter and I am the Executive Director of the Franklin County Community Based Correctional Facility and a member of CorJus, Inc. a non-profit organization representing several of Ohio's publicly operated Community Based Correctional Facilities. I appear before you today to offer comments on Senate Bill 22 which will generate millions in savings going a long way toward assisting with the issue of prison overcrowding.

The assorted sentencing reforms contained within Senate Bill 22 will afford the state of Ohio the opportunity to not only reduce the prison population but free up the necessary resources for community corrections to absorb these offenders and maintain safety and supervision over these offenders while they are in the community. The savings created by Senate Bill 22 creates the ability to redirect resources to community corrections programs which were reduced in the recently adopted substitute version of HB 1. For CBCFs, these additional funds will enable us to open 220 currently constructed but unfunded beds. Over a year's time, this will equate to the diversion of approximately 700 offenders from prison for a projected annual savings to the state of over \$3 million.

Let me take just a minute to provide the committee with an illustration of the range of services offered in Ohio's 18 CBCFs. While an offender is incarcerated in a CBCF, the offender is mandated to complete a rigorous treatment regimen including drug and alcohol addiction counseling, tools to assist in changing criminal behavior, the ability to obtain a GED and guidance in finding viable employment.

CBCFs need to make sure the communities we serve know they are safe and will not be further victimized by those offenders not sentenced to prison. This is evidenced by the fact that during Fiscal Year 2008, just under 2000 of the offenders who completed a CBCF program left employed either full or part-time. And this took place during tough economic times. Through this employment, CBCF clients earned nearly \$2 million in wages, from which restitution was paid, court costs and fines were collected, and, most important, child support was paid. In addition, CBCF clients completed nearly 230,000 hours of community service work. Offenders who leave a CBCF, are leaving tax paying, responsible citizens who are now contributing to the communities they once victimized and, in many cases, are working. You can't get any tougher on crime than that.

In considering the changes that would be in effect by passing Senate Bill 22 along with the projected savings, I believe that shifting those savings to CBCF's and community corrections gives the State of Ohio the best value for the dollar while continuing to keep the communities we serve safe.

In conclusion, I absolutely agree with Director Collins, when he indicates that CBCFs and all community corrections are a part of the holistic approach that encompasses providing punishment based options to Judges, prosecutors and the DRC to manage the prison population in a way that is sensible and does not compromise public safety. We are hopeful that with the passage of Senate Bill 22 and the implementation of the recommended sentencing reforms, the legislature will reinstate funding for community corrections including the additional \$7 million over the biennium to fund an additional

220 Community Based Correctional Facility beds. We look forward to our continued partnership with the department of Rehabilitation and Corrections and commend Director Collins and his team for their vision in recognizing that CBCFs can be a partner in solving prison overcrowding.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I draw your attention to a recent letter to the editor regarding sentencing reform which CorJus members sent to the Chillicothe Gazette which I have attached. Thank you for your time, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.