

Ohio Justice and Policy Center

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://ohiojpc.org/2020/11/20/lame-duck-2020/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

by [Marais Jacon-Duffy](#) | Nov 20, 2020 | [Blog](#), [Policy Reform](#)

The 2020 lame duck legislative session is underway in Ohio, and legislators need to hear from you!

Phone calls, emails, even tweets are effective and essential ways to advocate for change and its so easy to do! Several high-priority bills are on the verge of becoming law and they include sweeping reforms to Ohios criminal justice system.

You can follow the legislative process via The Ohio Channel. Committee hearings and legislative sessions are streamed live as they happen. You can also watch archived [House](#) and [Senate](#) hearings and archived [House](#) and [Senate](#) sessions on The Ohio Channel. Visit [The Ohio Channel here](#).

UPDATED Dec. 11:

Senate Bill 256End Juvenile Life Without Parole

SB 256 abolishes juvenile life without parole sentences with limited exceptions. It also mandates parole eligibility for kids who were sentenced before the age of 18. Ohio would become the 23rd state in the country to ban juvenile life without parole sentences if the bill is adopted. **Please contact the House Criminal Justice Committee and urge them to pass SB 256.** Tell representatives that no child is irredeemable and we want a policy that values redemption and hope.

Chairman George Lang
614-466-8550
[@LangForOhio](#)

Vice-Chair Phil Plummer
614-644-8051
[@PhilPlummerOH40](#)

Ranking Member David Leland
614-466-2473
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Rep. Jim Butler
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Rep. Jeffrey Crossman
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Rep. Al Cutrona
614-466-6107
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Rep. Tavia Galonski
614-644-6037
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Rep. Diane Grendell
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Rep. John Rogers
614-466-7251
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Rep. Bill Seitz
614-466-8258
[@CincySeitz](#)

Rep. Todd Smith
614-466-2960

@p11918

Rep. Thomas West
614-466-8030
@RepThomasWest

Substitute Senate Bill 3 Drug Sentencing

Sub SB 3 is monumentally important because it will change low-level drug possession cases from felonies into unclassified misdemeanors. This bill will remove at least 387 barriers to work and livelihood in Ohio. **The House Criminal Justice Committee needs to hear from as many people as possible with a simple message: people struggling with addiction need treatment not prison.** Contact the committee and tell them you support passing SB 3 because it changes felonies into misdemeanors!

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HB 1 Intervention in lieu of conviction/expanded record sealing

HB 1 will allow more people to enter into diversion programs for drug and alcohol abuse in lieu of a criminal conviction, and it will make it easier for people to seal past criminal convictions, and in turn expanding opportunities for people with criminal records. HB 1 passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on Dec. 9. Now, it just needs the Senate President to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. **Please call, email or tweet at Senate President Obhof and urge him to bring the bill for a vote.**

Sen. Larry Obhof
Senate President
614-466-7505
obhof@ohiosenate.gov
@LarryObhof

House Bill 136 Death Penalty exemption for serious mental illnesses

HB 136 ends the practice of sending individuals with severe mental illness to death row. The bill limits who can be sentenced to death by excluding people with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder and delusional disorder from death sentences. It was amended then passed by the full Senate on Dec. 9 by a vote of 27-3. The House already passed its version in June 2019, and all the House needs to do is agree to the two Senate amendments to the bill. **Please call Speaker Bob Cupp and urge him to allow the House to vote to accept Senate changes.** When this bill passes, Ohio will become the first state in the nation to protect individuals with severe mental illness from the death penalty.

Speaker Bob Cupp
614-466-9624
@SpeakerCupp

House Bill 263 Professional licensing

HB 263 will be up for a hearing next week in the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Development Committee. will help people with criminal records get access to the initial professional licenses they need in their field of work. Collateral sanctions restrict access to employment opportunities to anyone with a past criminal conviction, no matter how long ago or unrelated the charge. This bill limits licensure denials and the disqualification time since the conviction to five years. **Contact the Senate President, Chairman and members of the committee by phone (or tweet at them) and urge them to support and pass the bill. Please encourage them to *act quickly* before lame duck ends!**

Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee

Chairman Rob McColley
614-466-8150
@Rob_McColley

Vice-Chairman Terry Johnson
614-466-8082
@DrTerryAJohnson

Ranking Member Nickie Antonio
614-466-5123
@nickieantonio

Sen. Frank Hoagland
614-466-6508
@Hoag134

Sen. Jay Hottinger
614-466-5838
@JayHottinger

Sen. Stephanie Kunze
614-466-5981
@StephanieKunze

Sen. Tina Maharath
614-466-8064
@TinaMaharath

Sen. Nathan Manning
614-644-7613
@Manning_Nathan

Sen. Kristina Roegner
614-466-4823
@Kristinaroegner

Sen. Michael Rulli
614-466-8285
@michaelrulli

Sen. Vernon Sykes
614-466-7041
@DrVernonSykes

Bonus: Concerned about the death penalty? So are we. Here is how you can help.

Recently Gov. Mike DeWine announced Ohio will not conduct any lethal injection executions and is unofficially in a death penalty moratorium. If you, like us, think that Ohio should no longer be a death penalty state, please reach out to Governor Mike DeWine, and thank him for his thoughtful and careful approach to Ohios death penalty.

Governor DeWine
614-466-3555

@MikeDeWine

Contact Kevin Werner for information on any bills or if you would like to testify in favor one of these bills: kwerner@ohiojpc.org, 513-421-1108 x 14, @itskevinwerner

Register for one of OJPCs virtual legal clinics [here](#).

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