

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-ohio-urges-wholesale-rejection-senate-bill-55-ohio-house-set-vote-1pm>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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COLUMBUS At 1pm this afternoon, the Ohio House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on Senate Bill 55. This legislation is designed to add significantly more people to Ohios already dangerously overcrowded prison system, at a time when Ohio has gained national and international attention about the widespread problems with COVID-19 in ODRC facilities. The ACLU of Ohio urges a no vote on SB 55.

It is unconscionable the Ohio General Assembly remains almost entirely silent during this emergency regarding reducing our prison population and is now poised to exacerbate the problem. COVID-19 is spreading like wildfire in our prisons this is a crisis more serious and unlike any we have seen in Ohio prison history. We urge Ohio House Representatives to vote no on SB 55 which epitomizes the statehouse-to-prison-pipeline, added **Gary Daniels, Chief Lobbyist for the ACLU of Ohio.**

Senate Bill 55 would increase drug trafficking penalties by one degree if the offense takes place within 1,000 feet of a treatment center. Furthermore, the bill does not require the defendant to know they are within 1,000 feet of a treatment center, or that the person they sell to is actually undergoing treatment at the location in question.

In larger urban areas where more treatment centers are available, like Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, Akron, and Dayton, SB 55 will create large swaths where anyone caught selling drugs will face increased punishment. All the prosecutor needs to do is break out a tape measure, concluded Daniels.

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