

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/house-bill-8-proponent-testimony>

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Below is our Chief Lobbyist Gary Daniels proponent testimony on House Bill 8. This was delivered to the House Criminal Justice Committee on March 10, 2021.

To Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide the following proponent testimony for House Bill 8.

The ACLU of Ohio is happy to briefly add its support to HB 8. We applaud this effort to further require and incentivize the recording of custodial interrogations for specific, serious crimes. The benefits are many and are not limited to protecting the rights of the accused. Recording custodial interrogations also benefits law enforcement because such recordings will and do confirm their own claims when accused of inaccuracies or malfeasance.

This dual benefit is similar to when other technologies emerged that some in law enforcement resisted or opposed. Specifically, dash cameras and body-worn cameras were decried as unnecessary and too intrusive at one time. However, law enforcement largely changed their opinions on these devices once they learned and realized recordings can help corroborate what was said and done and to counter unfounded or false claims against them.

Recording custodial interrogations is also particularly relevant here given Ohios stubborn refusal to end capital punishment. In Ohio, we have experienced a shocking (so far) eleven exonerations in capital cases. Such an appalling statistic demonstrates there exists fundamental and deeply-flawed problems with Ohios legal system that desperately need fixed. HB 8 will obviously not solve all of these problems but it is recognition improvement is badly needed.

In short, HB 8 provides all upside, no downside, is not cost-prohibitive, and will be relatively simple to implement for law enforcement across the state. The ACLU of Ohio urges this committee to support House Bill 8.

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