

A Letter from Ohio Corrections Professionals to the State Legislature

[Date TBD]

Members of the Ohio General Assembly,

We write to you as current and former corrections professionals who have served as directors, wardens, officers, and staff in Ohio's correctional facilities. Many of us have been directly involved in carrying out executions, and all of us have served in institutions responsible for administering them.

Through our own personal experience, we have felt the deep and often lasting psychological toll that participating in state executions can inflict. We believe the death penalty causes extraordinary and unnecessary stress and trauma for the corrections staff responsible for carrying it out.

Our perspective is shaped by first-hand experience—overseeing executions, supporting our staff through them, and speaking candidly with colleagues who have participated. We know that carrying out an execution can take a serious toll on a corrections officer's well-being, often manifesting in emotional and psychological distress long after the event. Some of us continue to live with these events, especially those who had more direct, intimate roles in the process or who witnessed executions that did not go as planned.

As you know, corrections professionals are extraordinary people who dedicate their lives, and even risk their lives, to keep prisoners and the public safe. Executions put corrections officers in an exceedingly difficult position—the same officers who have protected the safety of people in prison are then asked to participate in the execution of someone who has lived under their care.

Our experience is that most of the people who are executed accept responsibility for the crimes for which they were convicted. Some, however, maintain their innocence until the end. These cases haunt us, and despite all efforts to prevent such, the risk of executing the innocent can only be avoided by not executing at all.

We fully and uniquely understand the challenge of managing people who are incarcerated and maintaining the safety of those who work inside prisons. Executions do no more to protect prison employees and incarcerated individuals than do appropriate prison management procedures, including proper evaluation of inmates, training of corrections employees, and fully resourced corrections departments. In fact, there are documented instances in which having the death penalty available has served

as an invitation to a person, tired of life in prison, to threaten to commit violence as a way to achieve an early death.

We urge you to seize the opportunity to repeal the death penalty in Ohio. In doing so, you will be doing a great service for your corrections employees, victims' families, and the criminal justice system. If we may be of assistance to you moving forward, please do not hesitate to call upon any of us.

Respectfully,
[signers to be listed in alphabetical order]

PLEASE ADD MY NAME TO THE LIST OF SIGNERS!

(Feel free to send this information via email – ty@otse.org)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name and Relevant Title(s):

Your City & County:

The following information is for internal use only. It will not be printed on the letter:

E-mail address:

Phone number:

Please return printed and signed forms to:

Ty Barnes - OTSE

341 S 3rd St. Suite 11

Columbus, OH 43215

Questions? Email Ty ty@otse.org