

#VOTENOISSUE1

October 28, 2022

Dear Ohio Voters:

This election offers you a choice for Ohio's future. On this year's ballot, you will be faced with a measure ("Issue 1") to amend our state's constitution and subvert the Ohio Supreme Court's ruling for how bail is set for people accused of crimes. The signers of this letter are organizations with roots in Ohio, serving Ohioans every day. We are deeply committed to a fair, safe, and equitable pretrial system, which we know will make Ohio safer and healthier for everyone. Issue 1 threatens to seriously undermine these goals. We write to strongly urge you to cast a "NO" vote on Issue 1 this November.

Issue 1 is being sold under the guise of public safety. But cash bail does not keep people safe: those with money still get out, even if they pose a danger to others, while those who are poor remain detained, even if they were innocent all along.

Pursuing legislative reforms, let alone constitutional amendments, that increase our state's reliance on cash bail moves us in the wrong direction. Issue 1 is a misguided effort to intentionally blur the lines between cash bail and public safety, creating a false equivalence between a bail amount and the safety of the public. Issue 1 devalues real public safety by intensifying failures of the status quo, where wealthy individuals can purchase their freedom simply because they have the money to do so.

The proposed constitutional amendment attacks a problem that doesn't exist. Judges in Ohio already consider public safety and can deny bail altogether, jailing defendants directly when they identify a public safety concern. Courts have a tool for denying bail, but it is not an excessive cash bail amount. The proposal also ignores a better available solution, House Bill 315, which is the result of bipartisan and broadly-supported coalition work that makes robust common sense changes to the pretrial system. Unlike Issue 1, HB 315 goes a long way to ending wealth-based detention and *actually* centers the safety of Ohioans. At best Issue 1 is unnecessary - at worst, it actively harms public safety.

Issue 1 would take judges' public safety deliberations and tangle them into cash bail calculations. Increased cash bail is not an effective or suitable tool for keeping people locked up under the guise of safety. Making public safety decisions in the form of exorbitant bail amounts means the wealthy can buy their freedom, regardless of public safety, while poor Ohioans are jailed because they can't afford their ticket out. **Issue 1 puts safety in the hands of the highest bidder.**

This is a mistake that would have significant financial and human costs. Issue 1 would undoubtedly increase the amount of people in jail because they don't have the money to purchase their freedom. Ohio taxpayers already pay a bloated [\\$300-400 million for pretrial detention every year](#), a number that this proposal would drive up. More importantly, Issue 1 would devastate low-income Ohioans, inflating the

number of people languishing in jail because their paycheck is too small. Such wealth-based detention disproportionately impacts Black residents, who are already overrepresented in Ohio's jails.

When you fill out your ballot, you'll be asked to amend the state constitution and reshape our state's bail laws for the worse. Issue 1 would hand Ohio taxpayers an even higher bill for our pretrial system, along with muddled public safety decision-making and a large human toll.

We ask you to vote "NO" on Issue 1, so that we can keep public safety decisions in Ohio courtrooms and out of Ohio bank accounts.

Sincerely,

1. The Bail Project
2. Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change (OFUPAC)
3. ACLU of Ohio
4. Ohio Justice and Policy Center
5. Ohio Families Unite Against Police Brutality
6. Office of the Ohio Public Defender
7. Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio
8. Ensuring Parole for Incarcerated Citizens- EPIC
9. Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
10. Organize! Ohio
11. The Freedom BLOC
12. Cleveland End Poverty Now Coalition
13. People's Justice Project
14. Ohio Fair Courts Alliance
15. Ohio Organizing Collaborative
16. Faith in Public Life Action Fund
17. Ohio Women's Alliance Action Fund
18. The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network (WPPN)
19. River Valley Organizing
20. Accomplices of Dayton Area SURJ
21. Dayton Anti-racist Network
22. InterReligious Task Force on Central America
23. Our Revolution Ohio
24. Black Lives Matter Cleveland Inc.
25. First Unitarian Universalist Church
26. Ohio Nuclear Free Network
27. National Association of Social Workers- Ohio Chapter
28. Say it Loud, Columbus
29. Honesty for Ohio Education
30. National Council of Jewish Women/Cleveland
31. Law Enforcement Action Partnership
32. Cleveland NAACP

33. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
34. HEAL Ohio
35. Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)
36. LEAD Ohio
37. Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry
38. OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
39. Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope
40. Red Wine & Blue
41. Nelsonville Voices
42. Opportunities Peoples Justice Leaders
43. Juvenile Justice Coalition