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February 3, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express the interest and ardent support of the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission (Commission), an affiliated office of the Supreme Court of Ohio, for the application for funding from the Program on Data and Governance at the Moritz College of Law, Ohio State University, for the project *Aligning Algorithmic Risk Assessments with Criminal Justice Values*.

The General Assembly created the Commission in Ohio Revised Code §181.21 through 181.25 to, among other things, study Ohio's criminal laws, sentencing patterns, and recommend comprehensive plans to the General Assembly that encourage public safety, proportionality, uniformity, certainty, judicial discretion, deterrence, fairness, simplification, more sentencing options, victims' rights, and other reasonable goals.

The Commission began meeting in 1991 and is the only long-standing state agency designed, by statute, to bring together judges, prosecuting and defense attorneys, corrections officials, law enforcement, victims' advocates, behavioral health professionals, academics, community corrections experts, and others with a direct interest in criminal sentencing. Therefore, the Commission is uniquely positioned to bridge the information gap among criminal justice system partners, provide an ongoing forum to debate policy initiatives and suggest comprehensive changes that affect prison and jail populations.

Currently, the Commission is the lead agency in the development of the Ohio Sentencing Data Platform (OSDP), a statewide criminal sentencing database. At the same time, the Ohio criminal justice system increasingly employs algorithmic risk assessments (ARAs) to inform bail and sentencing decisions. The OSDP will provide another tool that lawyers and judges might use in such decision-making and could impact the state's use of existing ARA tools.

Thus, while we are in the early stages of development of the OSDP now is the time to evaluate how Ohio is using ARAs. The Commission is a partner in the project, contributing funding toward the annual salary and benefits of a Senior Research Associate for the Program on Data and Governance.

Utilizing the results of this project, the Commission will be better able to inform courts throughout Ohio of best practices in relation to the use of ARAs. We will be able to formulate a set of recommendations to the Ohio Sentencing Data Platform Governance Board for consideration and possible referral to the Supreme Court of Ohio and, potentially, the Ohio General Assembly. In other words, the Commission is an organized, wide representation of stakeholders ready to work cohesively with the Program on Data and Governance to review the data and engage in robust discussion surrounding essential policy questions that contribute to making Ohio courts fair and equitable for all.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate and endorse this important, meaningful work. Should you have any questions or desire additional information, please contact me by email at [sara.andrews@sc.ohio.gov](mailto:sara.andrews@sc.ohio.gov) or by calling 614-329-0702.

Kind Regards,

Sara Andrews, Director