

MEETING AGENDA *<u>**REVISED</u>*** – FULL SENTENCING COMMISSION March 18, 2021 10:00 a.m.</u>

Zoom Webinar (see instructions on next page)

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87121480192?pwd=bWIHOTFJT1hpRWh2MUptN2RkdFB1UT09

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- I. Call to order, roll call & approval of meeting notes from December 17, 2020 Vice-Chair Selvaggio
- II. Ohio Sentencing Data Platform Project Update, Demo Judge Zmuda, Dr. Said – University of Cincinnati, Judge Reed
- III. Overview of recent Supreme Court of Ohio Jurisprudence & Legislative Considerations Scott Shumaker, All
- IV. HB1 Implementation Workgroup Update Lara Baker-Morrish
- V. Adjourn

Next Meeting

Thursday June 24, 2021 – Zoom

2021 Full Commission Meeting Dates (location TBD) Thursday September 16, 2021 Thursday December 16, 2021 Additional information is available on the Commission website <u>http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Boards/Sentencing/</u>

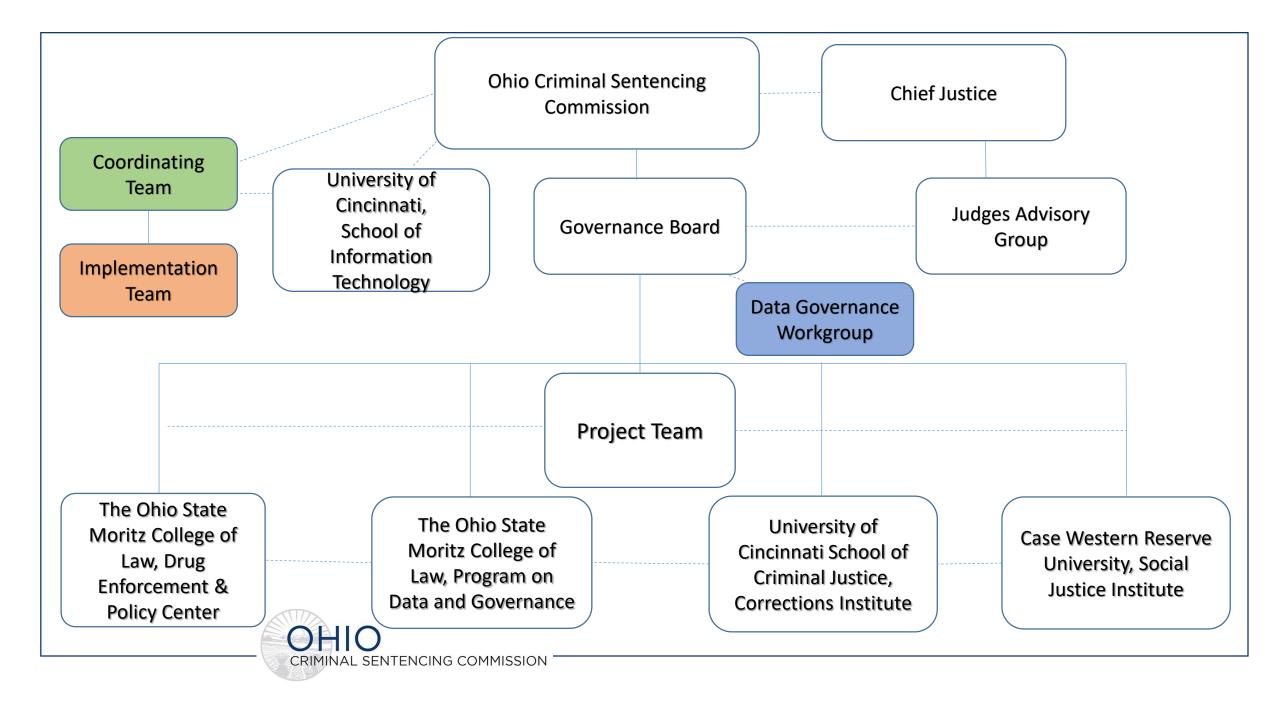


ZOOM WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS

- As a Commission Member you are a "panelist" for the meeting.
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- In the top right corner, you can choose between "gallery view" where you will see all commission and advisory committee members, or "speaker view" where zoom will highlight whomever is speaking.
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OTHER ATTENDEES

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SENTENCING DATABASE: BACKGROUND & PATH FORWARD

In 1999 the Supreme Court of Ohio <u>racial fairness commission</u> called for a statewide sentencing database to gather concrete information about the fairness and proportionality of criminal sentences.

Over 25 years, dozens of commissions, task forces, and blue-ribbon panels in Ohio and across the country reached the same conclusion about the critical need to collect sentencing and criminal justice data, yet haven't completed the task. Some of the struggles in implementation over the past 25 years included shifting priorities and public attention, cost, and technology (i.e., disconnected data sources and systems). Without data, we are proceeding indiscriminately, which is not in the best interest of the people of Ohio. Momentum is right now, and it is on the side of justice.

I. THE DATA GAP

In Ohio, basic questions about adults sentenced for felony offenses cannot be answered:

- What sentence did courts impose for each felony offender?
- How many people were sentenced to a specific felony offense this year?
- How many people were placed on community supervision?
- How many people were found not guilty (weren't sentenced)?
- How many sentences are imposed as a result of a plea bargain?

Aggregate data regarding pre-trial and sentencing practices in relationship to race, gender, ethnic background, or age does not exist in Ohio in a standardized format.

II. THE CRIMINAL SENTENCING COMMISSION

The proposed modernization of the Criminal Sentencing Commission enabling statutes would create the Criminal Justice Commission, an entity responsible for collecting the recommended data. The legislature has this proposal on its radar. Considering the need for data collection, the modernization of this commission must receive the urgent attention it deserves.

III. UNIFORM FELONY SENTENCING ENTRY

The Uniform Sentencing Entry and Method of Conviction Entries are the first steps to begin standardized, aggregate felony sentencing data collection in Ohio. This can be done in an efficient way, reducing duplication while not fiscally burdening local government. The proposed sentencing entry will provide consistency in the way judges impose sentences and will establish specific data points.

Implementing the uniform sentencing entry and the collection of data must be done incrementally – it is unrealistic to implement immediately as a statewide effort. The current first phase of the USE and data collection is being developed and tested for adoption by courts.

Public comment is encouraged, and information is available on the Commission's <u>website</u>.

At this time, collection of data and the utilization of the USE is not mandated, but may be required in the future by the Ohio Supreme Court's Rules of Superintendence and legislative action.

IV. LONG RANGE VISION – COMPREHENSIVE DATABASE

A unified data system, connected across all jurisdictions, would serve as an intelligent and productive umbrella over many initiatives including:

- Bail reform;
- Pretrial detention;
- Access to justice;
- Fair and impartial treatment at trial; and
- Sentencing reform.

The public must be informed so they can have faith in our justice system. They must be able to see equal justice for all, believe what they see, and be able to see injustice when it occurs. The way to demonstrate and then monitor equal justice is in facts and figures, in metrics and transparency.

SENTENCING DATABASE: DATA ELEMENTS

One of the most frequent questions about the felony sentencing database project is: what data elements will be collected? This question is vital to understanding how potentially useful (or burdensome) the new database will be. The data elements will be revised, and ultimately approved by several different advisory groups, therefore none of those groups must start from scratch.

For our purposes, there are essentially two groups of data elements: data elements coming directly from the Uniform Sentencing Entry (USE) and the accompanying methods of conviction entries (MOC); and additional data elements not included in the forms. These two groups are described in detail below.

I. DATA ELEMENTS IN THE USE AND MOC

The USE and MOC forms are key to the development of the sentencing database because they provide a universe of standardized data elements.

On the USE and MOC, there are multiple words in red brackets, for example, the county name. When the county name is put into the USE form, it becomes a data element that can be pulled into the sentencing database.

Similarly, the checkboxes seen on the entries indicating "yes" or "no" become data elements. For example, one of the first check boxes on the USE is for "interpreter cases." The instructions state to check that box if an interpreter is necessary at the sentencing hearing. Therefore, the data element is "interpreter necessary" and if the box is checked, that data element will contain "yes," and the box is unchecked, it will contain "no."

On the forms, there are two different levels of data elements: the case level (in other words, one entry per case) and the count level. A case may have multiple counts. However, there is a great deal of detail specific to counts. For example, the form asks for the sentence length, sentence type, and if the sentence is mandatory for each count.

When information is entered at the count level each count is tied to a case. This allows for analysis at the case level (aggregating all convicted counts), and at the count level (how many counts of felony assault were accompanied by a firearm specification, for example)

II. DATA ELEMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN USE AND MOC

There are additional data elements requiring collection which are not included in the USE and MOC forms. As many have pointed out, the forms do not include demographic information (such as race, gender identity, age, etc.). This is because sentencing entries (and method of conviction entries) do not typically include that information.

There are really two questions about these additional data elements: what additional information should we collect, and where can we gather it?

What additional information should we collect?

Examples of other pieces of data we may want to collect which are not included on the USE and MOC forms include: age, gender identity, employment status, marital status, residential status, number of children, and highest education level completed, among others.

Where will these additional data elements will be collected for the database, as they are not coming from the USE or MOC?

Given that one of the primary goals of this project is to avoid creating additional, duplicative work for courts, we will be searching for existing sources of that information to pull into the database.



THE OHIO SENTENCING DATA PLATFORM GOALS AND USES

The Ohio Sentencing Data Platform (OSDP) is designed to help judges implement the Uniform Sentencing and Method of Conviction forms and to empower courts with accessible and reliable information. The OSDP will achieve goals that include: using data to inform decision-making; improving transparency; and, making data accessible for the public, practitioners, and research.

USING DATA TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Providing accessible, searchable information about criminal sentencing will allow for data-informed decisions.

Data-informed decisions and policy (also called evidence-based) are achieved by using information and data to clearly identify successes and challenges. Using data to inform decisions allows successes to be replicated and provides solutions designed to meet challenges, thereby improving results. The data can also be used by policy makers to make sensible, cost-effective decisions, promote smart, effective use of resources, and ensure measured, proportional responses. Further, reliance on data creates opportunity to monitor and evaluate results, determine if the desired effects are achieved, and assess unintended consequences.

Giving justice-system practitioners, including judges, attorneys, and court staff the best information available for use during the sentencing process without administrative or fiscal burden, allows them to perform their public-service duties in the most impactful way.

The collection of sentencing data in a comprehensive and searchable database will inform decision-making and give judges the tools and information needed to impose sentences in accordance with the purposes and principles of felony sentencing. Further, it is a necessary and substantial step toward a more understandable, transparent, and fair criminal justice system. The existence of sentencing information is useful to all practitioners. For example, prosecutors may use the data to help inform sentencing recommendations and defense counsel can, in turn, also use data to compare sentencing recommendations among similarly situated offenders.

IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY

Improving transparency of the justice system and sentencing increases public confidence and trust.

Public trust and confidence are key in the administration of justice. While in public opinion surveys, courts and judges tend to have higher levels of trust than other public institutions and officials, these levels have diminished in recent years. From 2018 to 2019, there was an 11-percent decrease in respondents who expressed confidence in state courts. Moreover, less than one-half of respondents (49 percent) agreed that courts provided equal justice to all.¹

Research shows that most Americans are unfamiliar with court processes and sentencing practices, but increased transparency can empower the public to better understand the criminal justice system.

MAKING DATA ACCESSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC, PRACTITIONERS, AND RESEARCH

The sentencing data collected can be used to answer a number of basic questions that are currently unable to be answered and can inform criminal justice policy and research.²

As evidenced by decades of reports and recommendations, there is a perpetual desire for better sentencing data on patterns, trends, disparity, and proportionality. The development of a sentencing database will enable the compilation and organization of an abundance of information already collected in disconnected files and systems.

The OSDP presents the best chance to reflect the reality unfolding in courtrooms across Ohio and to help those involved in the criminal justice system. Sentencing data provides an opportunity for robust research, including comparisons of counties to demonstrate that community standards can drive law enforcement, prosecution, and sentencing decision-making.

ACCESS TO OSDP

Those who will access the system will be in one of two primary groups: data creators and data viewers.

Data Creators: Of the two groups, the creators are by far the smaller group. Creators, comprised of Ohio trial court judges and their staff generate data for the viewers. They populate the OSDP with information from sentencing entries, method of conviction entries, and supplemental biographical information from other existing sources. The process by which this information is entered into the OSDP will likely vary by court and by judge. There will be specific credentials for data creators and they will be the only ones allowed to enter or edit the data that goes into the OSDP.

An advantage for data creators is that while they are "creating" the data for the OSDP, they are concurrently filling out the information for their sentencing entry, making the process more streamlined and efficient. When the information is in the entry, it's in the system (and vice versa), eliminating the need for extra steps or effort on the part of the judge or court staff.

Data Viewers: This group is much larger and more amorphous. The data-viewer group may include, but is not limited to judges, court staff, attorneys, employees of other state agencies, academics, the media, and the general public. This group will be able to view and access the data entered into the system by the data creators.

WHAT OSDP IS NOT DESIGNED TO DO

While OSDP represents an enormous step forward in the use and collection of data in Ohio's criminal justice system, it is not a panacea. OSDP is explicitly designed *not* to replace the Ohio Courts Network, individual court case management systems, or to diminish judicial discretion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Sara Andrews

Director, Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission sara.andrews@sc.ohio.gov

ENDNOTES

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- 1 National Center for State Courts. "State of the State Courts—Survey Analysis, 2019." Jan. 3, 2020.
 - In Ohio, basic questions about adults sentenced for felony offenses cannot currently be answered:
 - What sentence was imposed for each felony offender?
 - How many people were sentenced to a specific felony offense in a year and at what level?
 - How many people are in or were placed in diversion programs?
 - How many people are on or were placed on court-ordered community control?
 - How many people were found not guilty (weren't sentenced)?
 - How many sentences are imposed as a result of a plea bargain?



TO: Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission

FROM: Scott Shumaker, Criminal Justice Counsel

DATE: 03/18/21

RE: Ohio Supreme Court Decisions 2017-2020 Summary Document

Commission staff have worked to compile a comprehensive list of the criminal decisions issued by the Ohio Supreme Court since 2017. The document provides a brief summary of each case, references the code section, rule, or constitutional provisions addressed, and further details any subsequent actions taken either directly as a result of the decision or otherwise.

There are some cases for which legislative action may be appropriate. References to proposed reforms on the topic, such as the work of the Commission, proposals of the Ohio Criminal Justice Recodification Committee (CJRC) and the Justice Reinvestment 2.0 initiative (JRI 2.0) are also included. The final document will soon be distributed and published on our website.

What follows are central themes present in these decisions:

1. STATUTORY COMPLEXITY AND INCREASING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

The provisions of Ohio's sentencing laws have grown increasingly complex in the twenty-five years since the enactment of Senate Bill 2's "truth in sentencing" scheme. We now operate under four different sentencing schemes for felonies – definite terms, non-life indefinite terms, life sentences subject to release by parole, and capital cases. Issues arising with pleas and sentencing have led to substantial litigation of "unforced errors" as practitioners attempt to navigate the complicated statutory web of the criminal code.

The complexity is highlighted by the decisions in <u>State v. Bishop</u>, 2018-Ohio-5132ⁱ, <u>State v. Hudson</u>, 2020-Ohio-3849ⁱⁱ, and <u>State v. Harper</u>, 2020-Ohio-2913ⁱⁱⁱ, all of which relate to required notices and imposition of post-release control conditions at sentencing. This issue alone has led to innumerable appellate cases, be they related to a plea colloquy, the sentencing hearing, or the journal entry. A further example is the required advisements in the non-life felony definite sentencing scheme of 132 GA Senate Bill 201, currently the subject of pending litigation before the Supreme Court of Ohio.

Notably, the recent work of the Commission to develop the Uniform Sentencing Entry and companion documents will assist practitioners in application of the law, but that effort should be coupled with the earnest effort to streamline and simplify the Revised Code. The Commission has long advocated for the need for simplification of Ohio's criminal laws, and these decisions reiterate the need for holistic change.



2. APPELLATE COURT REVIEW OF CRIMINAL SENTENCES

Appellate review of felony sentences was a lynchpin of the sentencing scheme enacted in SB 2 nearly twenty-five years ago. Judges were guided toward the minimum term from felony ranges and findings were required to impose sentences beyond the minimum term. That requirement was buttressed by robust appellate review of those sentences as provided in RC 2953.08. With the *Foster* decision in 2006 striking the need for findings, the central premise of appellate review in SB 2 was upended.

We still see the effects of *Foster*, as illustrated in *State v. Gwynne*, 2019-Ohio-4761^{iv}, *State v. Jones*, 2020-Ohio-6729^v, *State v. McFarland*, 2020-Ohio-3343^{vi}, and *State v. Patrick*, 2020-Ohio-6803^{vii}. These cases illustrate a need for clarity in the procedural review of sentences, such as: What in the record should be reviewed for sentences imposed by the trial court? At what point do consecutive sentences become a de facto life term? Should the discretionary imposition of a "functional" life sentence or of life without parole be reviewable on direct appeal, or only subject to Eighth Amendment challenge? And are sentences throughout the state consistent and proportional, as required by the tenets of RC 2929.11 and 2929.12?

3. BALANCING STATUTORY CHANGE AND HISTORICAL LEGAL PRECEDENT

Finally, the decisions in <u>State v. Nelson, 2020-OHIO-3690</u>^{viii} and <u>State v. Castner, 2020-Ohio-4950</u>^{ix}, reflect the conundrum of legislative enactment and practical application or implementation resulting in appellate litigation. These decisions echo the sentiment that criminal statutes and policies should be clear, concise, effective, and able to adapt to new challenges. Thus, there is a need for a broader, holistic and realistic discussion for sentencing structure and criminal justice policy in Ohio.

ⁱ State v. Bishop, 156 Ohio St. 3d 156, 2018-Ohio-5132

SUMMARY: The Court held that when a defendant on post-release control enters a guilty plea on a new felony, the trial court must inform that defendant during the Criminal Rule 11 colloquy that it is permitted by statute to terminate their existing post-release control and to sentence the defendant to a consecutive term of imprisonment for violating post-release control by committing a new felony.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: Crim. R. 11, 2929.141

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Necessary advisements are included in the uniform entries, including good civics forms.

ⁱⁱ State v. Hudson, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-3849

SUMMARY: Defendant was sentenced to prison, and the initial sentencing entry failed to properly impose post-release control obligations. After having served their sentence, they appealed their sentence and placement on post-release control. Following the holding in *State v. Harper,* 2020-OHIO-2193, the Court held that the sentence was not void and therefore was barred by res judicata as it was not addressed on direct appeal.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2931.03, RC 2967.28.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Instructions to the Uniform Entries and attendant Method of Convictions and "Good Civics" forms will assist practitioners in avoiding these types of errors.



^{III} State v. Harper, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-2913

SUMMARY: In deciding an issue challenging improper imposition of post-release control made after a defendant's release from prison, the Court revisited its void-versus-voidable jurisprudence and held that improper imposition of post-release control does not render the sentence void and subject to collateral attack at any time, but rather voidable and therefore such issues must be addressed on direct appeal.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2929.19, 2967.28

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Adoption of the Uniform Sentencing Entry and attendant templates will assist practitioners in avoiding these types of errors at the trial level.

^{iv} State v. Gwynne, 158 Ohio St.3d 279, 2019-Ohio-4761

SUMMARY: Plurality decision where Court narrowly held that the 5th District Court of Appeals erred in considering the purposes and principles of sentencing in RC 2929.11 and 2929.12 when reviewing a large number of consecutive sentences – a 65 year stated prison term for a 55-year-old non-violent offender.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2953.08

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [Gwynne, McFarland, Jones]: The Commission has long supported efforts to refine RC 2953.08. After review of these cases, the Uniform Sentencing Entry Update Protocol group chose to include an optional section allowing judges to include the RC 2929.11 and .12 factors in the entry with the ability for courts to supplement the entry with any other relevant consideration.

^v <u>State v. Jones, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-6729</u>

SUMMARY: Defendants appealed a ten-year sentence imposed for their involuntary manslaughter conviction following the death of a child in their care. The Eighth District found, pursuant to RC 2953.08(G)(2), that the length of the sentence was "contrary to law" in light of the purposes and principles of felony sentencing set forth in RC 2929.11. The Court held that RC 2953.08 does not allow this this type of independent review or modification of felony sentences for compliance with RC 2929.11 or RC 2929.12. The Court also held that the language relied upon by the Eighth District from *State v. Marcum*, 2016-Ohio-1002 was dicta.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2929.11, 2929.12, 2953.08

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [Gwynne, McFarland, Jones]: The Commission has long supported efforts to refine RC 2953.08. After review of these cases, the Uniform Sentencing Entry Update Protocol group chose to include an optional section allowing judges to include the RC 2929.11 and .12 factors in the entry with the ability for courts to supplement the entry with any other relevant consideration.

vi State v. McFarland, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-3343

SUMMARY: Defendant challenged their convictions based on a sufficiency of the evidence argument where they were sentenced to life without parole for a conspiracy to commit aggravated murder and sentenced to life without parole. The Court affirmed the Eighth District holding that there was sufficient evidence to support the convictions.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: US Const. Amend. 8, RC 2953.08, 2903.01

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [Gwynne, McFarland, Jones]: The Commission has long supported efforts to refine RC 2953.08. After review of these cases, the Uniform Sentencing Entry Update Protocol group chose to include an optional section allowing judges to include the RC 2929.11 and .12 factors in the entry with the ability for courts to supplement the entry with any other relevant consideration.



vii State v. Patrick, Slip Opinion No. 2020-OHIO-6803

SUMMARY: The Court held that the prohibition on appeal of felony sentences for aggravated murder and murder set forth in RC 2953.08(D)(3) does not prohibit a defendant from appealing based on claimed violations of their constitutional rights. Defendant appealed a sentence of 33 years to life for an aggravated murder committed while they were age 17, and alleged the punishment was cruel and unusual in violation of the Eighth Amendment. The Court held that an extended sentence such as this is subject to the same scrutiny as a life without parole sentence, and that trial courts must consider the youth of juvenile offenders when they are sentenced as an adult. The case was remanded for resentencing for the trial court to make such considerations.

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2953.08, 2929.03, US Const. Amend. 8, Ohio Const. Art I. § 9

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Days before this decision was issued, the 133rd General Assembly passed SB 256, a bill barring the imposition of life without parole sentences for juvenile offenders. The bill also provides parole eligibility timelines for juveniles currently serving extended adult sentences and mandates that courts consider age-relevant factors in imposing sentences on such offenders. The bill was signed into law by the Governor January 9, 2021 and takes effect April 12, 2021.

viii <u>State v. Nelson, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-3690</u>

SUMMARY: The Court addressed the meaning of "technical violation" of community control under the RC 2929.15(B) probation violator caps. Defendant argued that any violation that is not a new felony is a "technical violation." The Court disagreed, holding that the lack of a definition of the term gives courts discretion to determine what conduct constitutes a "technical violation" of community control, and that defendant's violation of a no-contact order and subsequent misdemeanor conviction did not constitute a "technical violation."

REVISED CODE SECTIONS: RC 2929.15

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [Nelson, Castner]: Changes to RC 2929.15 made in 133 GA HB 1 impact these provisions and this line of cases. This is under consideration for updates to the Uniform Sentencing Entries and is a provision included in the study and reporting of the impact of HB 1 by the Commission per RC 181.27.

ix State v. Castner, Slip Opinion No. 2020-Ohio-4950

SUMMARY: Defendant appealed a twelve-month sentence after being removed from two court ordered drug treatment programs as a condition of community control, arguing that the violations were technical in nature and therefore limited his prison sentence to ninety days under RC 2929.15(B). The Court applied the analysis it set forth in *State v. Nelson*, 2020-Ohio-3690 and held that the court ordered treatment was a "substantive rehabilitative requirement specifically tailored to address" the defendant's drug problems, and that the nature of the defendant's violations (being kicked out of treatment for contacting underage girls using the treatment facility's phone and computer), considered in light of his prior criminal history (sex offenses involving underage girls) rose above the level of a technical violation of community control. **REVISED CODE SECTIONS**: RC 2929.15

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [Nelson, Castner]: Changes to RC 2929.15 made in 133 GA HB 1 impact these provisions and this line of cases. This is under consideration for updates to the Uniform Sentencing Entries and is a provision included in the study and reporting of the impact of HB 1 by the Commission per RC 181.27.



HB1 Implementation Workgroup

HB1 Calendar of Events

January 7, 2021: Governor DeWine signed HB1 into law.

April 12, 2021: HB1 effective.

July 12, 2021: HB1 Impact Study required to begin (ORC Sec. 181.27 (B)(1)).

December 31, 2021: First HB1 impact report due to Governor DeWine (ORC Sec. 181.27 (B)(2)).¹

Proposed Timeline & Discussion Topics

• February (February 26, 2021, 10am)

- $\circ \quad \text{Review of Provisions} \quad$
 - What is included? How should impact be measured? Additional resources and/or contacts?
 - Proposed meeting date for group discussion of each topic
 - Goals for 2021 report & long-term impact outcomes (for 2023 report and beyond)

March 26, 2021 10am--Zoom Record Sealing: ORC Sec. 109.11, 2953.31, and 2953.32

• April 23, 2021 10am--Zoom

Intervention in Lieu of Conviction: ORC Sec. 2951.041

• May 2021 (TBD)

Involuntary Commitment to Treatment, Probate Courts: ORC Sec. 5119.93, 5119.94

• June 2021 (TBD)

Incarceration on Technical Violations: ORC Sec. 2929.15

- July through October 2021 (TBD)
 - Preliminary report discussion outline, content for report
 - Resolve any outstanding issues
 - Update and status of data collection and analysis
- November 2021 (TBD)
 - Finalize draft report
- December 2021
 - Submit report

¹ Reports due "biennially thereafter" December 31, 2021 (ORC Sec. 181.27 (B)(2)).