



**Cuyahoga County  
Community Mental Health Board**

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**Oppose HB 227 – Civil Commitment of Sexually Violent Offenders!**

**TO:** All Mental Health Advocates  
**FROM:** Scott S. Osiecki, Director of External Affairs  
**DATE:** March 23, 2006  
**RE:** **Write to the Ohio Senate in Opposition of HB 227**

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**BACKGROUND:**

**HB 227 – Civil Commitment of Sexually Violent Offenders** - was introduced by Representative Keith Faber and passed the House of Representatives with a 94-0 vote on March 14, 2006. The bill has moved to the State Senate Judiciary Criminal Justice Committee for deliberation. If HB 227 is signed into law the bill would authorize the civil commitment of sexually violent predators to the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) to be housed in a locked forensic unit after the predator serves prison time.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Send a letter or call the members of the Senate Judiciary Criminal Justice Committee, as well as the Senators that represent Cuyahoga County (contact information below) and let them know that you are opposed to HB 227. Be sure to point out that:

- The impact of HB 227 would further hinder the ability of the community mental health system to serve people with serious mental illness in the community who require hospitalization, by increasing the already high number of beds used for forensic clients, leaving even fewer beds available for civil commitments.
- At about \$500 per hospital bed day, the cost of housing in a state hospital can be up to three, four, or even five times the amount of incarceration in a state penitentiary.
- The mental health community, including the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board (CCCMHB), the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA), and the Coalition for Healthy Communities (CHC), is concerned that once a sexually violent offender is released from a state mental hospital, the cost of his or her ongoing treatment will become the responsibility of the local mental health board, part of a system that is seriously under funded with waiting lists for services, thus taking further resources away from citizens who struggle with mental illness.
- The entire mental health community has been working relentlessly to educate the community about the disease of mental illness and encouraging people to seek treatment, the CCCMHB, OACBHA and CHC are anxious about the wrong message that HB 227 is sending by identifying sexually violent predators as mentally ill, and the passage of this bill would undermine the progress that has been made to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness.
- Sexually violent predators are criminals and should not be labeled mentally ill simply to circumvent the constitutional prohibition against double jeopardy, and lawmakers should focus time, attention and our state's limited financial resources at extending the prison time that these criminals receive at the time of sentencing.

## **SENATE CONTACT INFORMATION:**

### **All Senators Mailing Address:**

The Honorable (name)  
Senate Building  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

### **Senate Judiciary Criminal Justice Committee:**

Chair: Senator Jim Jordan	614-466-7584
Senator Patricia Clancy	614-466-8068
Senator Steve Austria	614-466-3780
Senator Steve Stivers	614-466-5981
Senator Timothy Grendell	614-644-7718
Senator J. Kirk Schuring	614-466-0626
Senator Marc Dann	614-466-7182
Senator Eric Kearney	614-466-5980
Senator Kimberly Zurz	614-466-7041

### **Cuyahoga County Senate Delegation:**

Senator C.J. Prentiss	614-466-4857
Senator Dale Miller	614-466-5123
Senator Robert F. Spada	614-466-8056
Senator Eric D. Fingerhut	614-466-4583