Policy Matters Ohio

TESTIMONY

June 3, 2026
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Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee on HB 338

In December 2024 Officer Andrew Lansing was killed while working overtime on Christmas morning alone in the center of the prison yard[1] at Ross Correctional Institution in Chillicothe. Ross Correctional Institution is a mid to high security prison that houses level 2-3 prisoners.[2] Prior to this incident, an incarcerated Ohioan had not killed a correctional officer since 1996.[3]

The sponsors of House Bill 338, or "Andy's Law," say the bill will "minimize the possibility that another officer is killed in the line of duty."[4] They hope to do so in part by eliminating all higher education programs at high security state correctional institutions.

H.B. 338 sponsors have not elaborated on the connection between increasing safety in prisons and eliminating higher education programs. They will have a hard time making such a case since providing higher education in Ohio's higher security prisons has been shown to reduce violence in prisons, increase safety for prison employees,[5] and reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated people.[6]

An Ohio-based 2017 study from the American Society of Criminology showed that incarcerated people who earned GEDs or completed college classes were less likely to engage in violence than those who did not. Incarcerated students were also less likely to be reincarcerated within three years after release.[7] Incarcerated people with access to higher education may also learn more about mental health, leading to a more sustainable rehabilitation.[8] The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections' Director has referred to access to education while in prison as a "rehabilitative necessity" and has said that the people who most need the "rehabilitative power of education" are often in Ohio's high security prisons.[9]

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[1] Remembering Correction Officer Andrew "Andy" Lansing. Correctional Peace Officers Foundation, Dec. 1, 2025.
[2] Ohio has 5 security levels for incarceration, 1-4 and E; Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5120-9-52 Initial classification of inmates https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-5120-9-52; Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Audit Report Adult Prisons & Jails, Apr. 29, 2021, Facility security levels/inmate custody levels
[3] Last fatal attack on Ohio prison employee before Andrew Lansing's death was 28 years ago by Laura A. Bischoff, Columbus Dispatch, Dec. 26, 2024.
[4] Mark Johnson and Phil Plummer Sponsor Testimony, Ohio House of Representatives, Oct. 15, 2025 https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb338/committee; Bill Text As Introduced Sec. 2903.01(A); 3923.283 (B)(C) https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_136/legislation/hb338/00_IN/pdf/
[5] Expanding Access to Postsecondary Education in Prison: Fact Sheet for Corrections Leaders, Vera Institute of Justice, Jan. 2017.
[6] Reducing Inmate Misconduct and Prison Returns with Facility Education Programs by Amanda Pompoco et al, Criminology & Public Policy, Vol. 16, Issue 2, May 22, 2017.
[7] See Note 6,
[8] Ohio Prisons Offering Wide Range of Educational Opportunities, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Aug. 26, 2022; A look inside classes at an Ohio prison by Megan Henry, Ohio Capital Journal, Sept. 11, 2023.
[9] See Note 8

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Keeping education programs intact and using funding to expand them will decrease recidivism[10] and increase safety[11] for correctional employees engaged in this field of work. For those reasons, H.B. 338 should be amended to remove the restriction on higher education or opposed for failure to do so.

[10] A look inside classes at an Ohio prison by Megan Henry, Ohio Capital Journal, Sept. 11, 2023.
[11] See Note 8