



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

November 22, 2019

The Honorable Tim Schaffer
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: S.B. 217

Dear Senator Schaffer:

The Criminal Law and Procedure Committee has reviewed your bill, Senate Bill 217, which would require all Tier II and III sex offender/child-victim offenders to display a special "SORN law license plate" or decal on any motor vehicle they operate. I would like to share with you the Committee's feedback.

As an initial matter, I am enclosing a copy of the Judicial Conference's Policy Statement on Criminal Registries and Databases. While your bill does not pertain to registries or databases, many of the concepts contained in the Policy Statement are relevant, particularly as it pertains to sex offenders and the evidence surrounding the public-safety efficacy of offense-based classifications. Additionally, judges predict that a SORN license plate or decal could lead to an increase in road-rage or vehicular-vandalism incidents.

As a practical matter, S.B. 217 could have a huge impact on common pleas court caseload. The bill provides that the license-plate or decal requirement applies to certain sex offenders both prospectively and retroactively, requiring courts to issue orders pertaining to the plates/decals even to offenders who have already been sentenced. This would require offenders to be present in court, which, for offenders still incarcerated, could result in significant transport costs imposed upon local governments.

Thank you for considering the feedback of Ohio's judges. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Pfeifer
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable John Eklund, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Cecil Thomas, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

OHIO JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

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