

Your vote & voice matter to end mass incarceration in Ohio.

In Ohio, more than 19,000 people are in jail every day, and over half (57%) of them are not serving a sentence. But you have the power to champion pretrial justice!

This info sheet can help you hold accountable those who directly implement pretrial policy and practices in your community.



The Actors



Judge (Municipal and Common Pleas Court)

Municipal Court judges have jurisdiction over misdemeanor cases, and conduct the bail hearings for both misdemeanor and felony cases. Court of Common Pleas judges have jurisdiction over bail reviews in felony cases.



Prosecutor (City Solicitor/County Prosecutor)

City solicitors are responsible for the prosecution of misdemeanor cases within city limits. The county prosecutor is responsible for the prosecution of all other misdemeanors, and all felony cases in the Court of Common Pleas. Both can make recommendations to the court regarding bail.



Sheriff

The sheriff, who is the head of the county's law enforcement, decides who to arrest (in some places) and runs the jail. The sheriff also provides court services, such as court security and serving warrants.



County Commissioner/County Council Member

All counties in Ohio (except Cuyahoga and Summit) have a County Commissioner system, with three elected officials comprising the Commission. The other two counties have a County Council system, with 11 elected members. Both Commissions and Councils are responsible for assuring that taxpayer money, including that spent on the county jail, is used effectively.

Quick Facts

Mass incarceration begins at the pretrial stage. People who are unable to gain pretrial release, often because they can't afford money bond, are less likely to be acquitted, frequently due to the pressure to take a plea deal to get out of jail. They are also more likely to receive a sentence involving incarceration.

Time in jail is destabilizing and traumatizing, often involving loss of employment, housing, child custody and access to medication.

Pretrial detention comes at a high price. Cuyahoga County alone spent \$42 million in a single year, just on locking up people before trial.

You can change this dynamic with your vote in local elections for judges, prosecutors, sheriffs, and county commissioners & council members.





Questions You Can Ask

How to evaluate an official's stance on pretrial justice.



| | SHERIFF | PROSECUTOR | JUDGE | COMMISSIONER/ COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER |
|--|---------|------------|-------|---|
| What is their position on the use of citations rather than booking people into jail? | x | x | | x |
| What is their position on having public defenders at bail hearings? | | x | x | x |
| What is their position on the use of money bail? | | x | x | x |
| Do they know what pretrial release options are used most frequently in the jurisdiction? | | x | x | x |
| What is their position on the use of diversion from jail? | | x | x | x |
| What is their position on assessing an ability to pay when setting money bail or assigning fees? | | x | x | |
| What does the jail do for people who need services relating to a mental health or substance abuse disorder? | x | x | x | x |
| What steps will they take to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system? Are they willing to collect and share data on who is arrested and why, who is detained pretrial and why, and the racial make-up of the jail? | x | x | x | |
| How will they be accountable to the community to follow through on campaign promises? | x | x | x | x |