



AFRICAN AMERICAN COALITION OF INDIANAPOLIS – AACI

January 18, 2022

Sen. Rodric Bray
Senate President Pro Tempore
Indiana General Assembly
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Hon. President Bray:

We appreciate the opportunity to be heard on a series of bills assigned to the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law committee.

The African American Coalition of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Urban League and Indiana Black Expo write to express our concern about SB 6, SB 7, SB 8, SB 9, and SB 10, which taken together demonstrate a fundamental difference on how we collectively believe issues involving bail, electronic monitoring and public safety should be addressed. While these bills appear to be written neutral on their face, in application these bills have a greater tendency to affect minorities and have disproportionate impact on those from low-income communities.

SB 6 criminalizes poor people who cannot afford bail. We take umbrage with public comments that “there’s no rich people in Marion County committing these crimes.” as reported in the IndyStar on 1/12/2022. We are concerned about the constitutional issues raised by treating people different based on an accusation of a violent crime. While we remain concerned about violence occurring in Marion County, violating constitutional rights does not improve society.

SB 7 on Marion County crime reduction pilot is unnecessary as law enforcement currently collaborates regularly.

SB 8 targets charitable organizations that provide bail to people who do not have the financial resources to pay. Limiting the ability of charitable organizations to pay bail will have a disproportionate impact on poor people in Marion County. As was highlighted in the hearing, the Bail Project, which we believe is the target of this legislation, has a lower recidivism rate than for-profit bail and a higher rate of defendant’s returning to court to await trial, i.e., one of the primary purposes of bail.

SB 9 addresses electronic monitoring. While we remain concerned about the use of this technology within Marion County, the language concerning escape is overly broad and could result in serious consequences due to malfunctions or the slightest deviation. The use of electronic monitoring needs to be addressed, but this bill is overly punitive for people the court has deemed do not need to be in jail.

SB 10 established a violence reduction pilot project and additional funding to support violence reduction initiatives. While we recognize that law enforcement alone can not reduce violence in the long term, providing additional funding to address violent crime is a worthy initiative. We remain concerned about how “violence reduction areas” will be identified and what additional law enforcement means in this area of Marion County. The utilization of hot spot policing undermined police and community relationships in the past. We are concerned that this bill, while



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well intentioned has a greater likelihood of harming minority communities as result of increased law enforcement presence.

Ideally, we would prefer a focus on root causes of crime including food insecurity, mental health issues, lack of economic opportunity, and other quality of life issues.

We encourage dialogue on these issues and others as we seek to work together to address shared issues of concern. But we also note that engaging Black led organizations on issues that will have a disproportionate impact of Black Hoosiers should be a prudent practice in the development of public policy.

Respectfully,

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