

**ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
BOARD OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY**

**RESOLUTION NO. 09-09-01**

**SUPPORT OF SB 22: PRISON REFORM**

**WHEREAS**, more people are incarcerated in Ohio's prisons than almost any other time in history and if this trend continues Ohio's prison population will increase from its current number of 51,000 inmates to nearly 60,000 in the next ten years, and these numbers are dire as our prisons presently operate at 132% of their capacity, already causing considerable hardship to staff and inmates alike; and,

**WHEREAS**, 57% of inmates serve sentences of less than one year for non-violent offenses like non-payment of child support and low-level drug possession and prisons have virtually become Ohio's de-facto mental health institutions; and,

**WHEREAS**, treatment is more effective than incarceration for mental health and addiction recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 22 was introduced by Republican Senator Bill Seitz in February 2009 to reform laws to reduce the punishment and time spent in prison for certain non-violent crimes; and,

**WHEREAS**, SB 22 does not remedy all prison reform issues, but it does contain several provisions that would undoubtedly change Ohio's criminal justice and prison systems for the better, and the relatively modest changes proposed in the bill have widespread support from various advocacy groups, attorneys, industry professionals and even Terry Collins, the Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and it appears the only organized opposition to SB 22 comes from the prosecutors' lobby; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio is coordinating a statewide advocacy effort including a *Sign-on Letter to Legislators* requesting action to reform the criminal justice and prison systems and garners support for SB 22.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. The ADAMHS Board of Directors agrees that prison reform is necessary and authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to notify the ACLU of Ohio to include the ADAMHS Board on the *Sign-on Letter to Legislators* that requests action to reform the criminal justice and prison systems and garners support for SB 22.
2. A copy of this resolution will be sent to the ACLU of Ohio.

On the motion of Ericka L. Thoms, seconded by Reginald C. Blue, Ph.D., the foregoing resolution was unanimously adopted.

**AYES:** Reginald C. Blue, Ph.D., Pastor Charles E. Brown, Eugenia Cash, J. Robert Fowler, Ph.D., Kathryn E. Gambatese, Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., Janet C. Hnanicek, Pythias D. Jones, M.D., Rick A. Kemm, MNO, Amy S. Leopard, Esq., Rev. Charlotte Still Noble, Lisa Thomas, Ph.D., Ericka L. Thoms, Mary R. Warr, Anngela Williams

**DATE ADOPTED:** September 23, 2009