



Ohio Revised Code

Section 5139.50 Release authority - appointment - duties.

Effective: April 7, 2009

Legislation: House Bill 130 - 127th General Assembly

(A) The release authority of the department of youth services is hereby created as a bureau in the department. The release authority shall consist of five members who are appointed by the director of youth services and who have the qualifications specified in division (B) of this section. The members of the release authority shall devote their full time to the duties of the release authority and shall neither seek nor hold other public office. The members shall be in the unclassified civil service.

(B) A person appointed as a member of the release authority shall have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or equivalent relevant experience and shall have the skills, training, or experience necessary to analyze issues of law, administration, and public policy. The membership of the release authority shall represent, insofar as practicable, the diversity found in the children in the legal custody of the department of youth services.

In appointing the five members, the director shall ensure that the appointments include all of the following:

- (1) At least four members who have five or more years of experience in criminal justice, juvenile justice, or an equivalent relevant profession;
- (2) At least one member who has experience in victim services or advocacy or who has been a victim of a crime or is a family member of a victim;
- (3) At least one member who has experience in direct care services to delinquent children.

(C) The initial appointments of members of the release authority shall be for a term of six years for the chairperson and one member, a term of four years for two members, and a term of two years for one member. Thereafter, members shall be appointed for six-year terms until the effective date of this amendment, after which members shall be appointed for four-year terms. At the conclusion of



a term, a member shall hold office until the appointment and qualification of the member's successor. The director shall fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of a term for the remainder of that term and, if a member is on extended leave or disability status for more than thirty work days, may appoint an interim member to fulfill the duties of that member. A member may be reappointed. A member may be removed for good cause by the director.

(D) The director of youth services shall designate as chairperson of the release authority one of the members who has experience in criminal justice, juvenile justice, or an equivalent relevant profession. The chairperson shall be a managing officer of the department, shall supervise the members of the board and the other staff in the bureau, and shall perform all duties and functions necessary to ensure that the release authority discharges its responsibilities. The chairperson shall serve as the official spokesperson for the release authority.

(E) The release authority shall do all of the following:

(1) Serve as the final and sole authority for making decisions, in the interests of public safety and the children involved, regarding the release and discharge of all children committed to the legal custody of the department of youth services, except children placed by a juvenile court on judicial release to court supervision or on judicial release to department of youth services supervision, children who have not completed a prescribed minimum period of time or prescribed period of time in a secure facility, or children who are required to remain in a secure facility until they attain twenty-one years of age;

(2) Establish written policies and procedures for conducting reviews of the status for all youth in the custody of the department, setting or modifying dates of release and discharge, specifying the duration, terms, and conditions of release to be carried out in supervised release subject to the addition of additional consistent terms and conditions by a court in accordance with section 5139.51 of the Revised Code, and giving a child notice of all reviews;

(3) Maintain records of its official actions, decisions, orders, and hearing summaries and make the records accessible in accordance with division (D) of section 5139.05 of the Revised Code;

(4) Cooperate with public and private agencies, communities, private groups, and individuals for the



development and improvement of its services;

(5) Collect, develop, and maintain statistical information regarding its services and decisions;

(6) Submit to the director an annual report that includes a description of the operations of the release authority, an evaluation of its effectiveness, recommendations for statutory, budgetary, or other changes necessary to improve its effectiveness, and any other information required by the director.

(F) The release authority may do any of the following:

(1) Conduct inquiries, investigations, and reviews and hold hearings and other proceedings necessary to properly discharge its responsibilities;

(2) Issue subpoenas, enforceable in a court of law, to compel a person to appear, give testimony, or produce documentary information or other tangible items relating to a matter under inquiry, investigation, review, or hearing;

(3) Administer oaths and receive testimony of persons under oath;

(4) Request assistance, services, and information from a public agency to enable the authority to discharge its responsibilities and receive the assistance, services, and information from the public agency in a reasonable period of time;

(5) Request from a public agency or any other entity that provides or has provided services to a child committed to the department's legal custody information to enable the release authority to properly discharge its responsibilities with respect to that child and receive the information from the public agency or other entity in a reasonable period of time.

(G) The release authority may delegate responsibilities to hearing officers or other designated staff under the release authority's auspices. However, the release authority shall not delegate its authority to make final decisions regarding policy or the release of a child.

The release authority shall adopt a written policy and procedures governing appeals of its release and



discharge decisions.

(H) The legal staff of the department of youth services shall provide assistance to the release authority in the formulation of policy and in its handling of individual cases.