

**As Introduced**

**135th General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2023-2024**

**H. B. No. 234**

**Representatives Williams, Rogers**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Schmidt, Willis, Hillyer, Upchurch, Humphrey, Seitz**

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**A BILL**

To amend sections 2929.12 and 2929.22 of the 1  
Revised Code to prohibit a court imposing a 2  
sentence on an offender for a felony or 3  
misdemeanor from considering whether the 4  
offender who entered an Alford plea shows 5  
genuine remorse for the offense. 6

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 2929.12 and 2929.22 of the 7  
Revised Code be amended to read as follows: 8

**Sec. 2929.12.** (A) Unless otherwise required by section 9  
2929.13 or 2929.14 of the Revised Code, a court that imposes a 10  
sentence under this chapter upon an offender for a felony has 11  
discretion to determine the most effective way to comply with 12  
the purposes and principles of sentencing set forth in section 13  
2929.11 of the Revised Code. In exercising that discretion, the 14  
court shall consider the factors set forth in divisions (B) and 15  
(C) of this section relating to the seriousness of the conduct, 16  
the factors provided in divisions (D) and (E) of this section 17  
relating to the likelihood of the offender's recidivism, ~~and~~ the 18

factors set forth in division (F) of this section pertaining to 19  
the offender's service in the armed forces of the United States, 20  
and the factors set forth in division (G) of this section 21  
relating to Alford pleas and, in addition, may consider any 22  
other factors that are relevant to achieving those purposes and 23  
principles of sentencing. 24

(B) The sentencing court shall consider all of the 25  
following that apply regarding the offender, the offense, or the 26  
victim, and any other relevant factors, as indicating that the 27  
offender's conduct is more serious than conduct normally 28  
constituting the offense: 29

(1) The physical or mental injury suffered by the victim 30  
of the offense due to the conduct of the offender was 31  
exacerbated because of the physical or mental condition or age 32  
of the victim. 33

(2) The victim of the offense suffered serious physical, 34  
psychological, or economic harm as a result of the offense. 35

(3) The offender held a public office or position of trust 36  
in the community, and the offense related to that office or 37  
position. 38

(4) The offender's occupation, elected office, or 39  
profession obliged the offender to prevent the offense or bring 40  
others committing it to justice. 41

(5) The offender's professional reputation or occupation, 42  
elected office, or profession was used to facilitate the offense 43  
or is likely to influence the future conduct of others. 44

(6) The offender's relationship with the victim 45  
facilitated the offense. 46

(7) The offender committed the offense for hire or as a part of an organized criminal activity. 47  
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(8) In committing the offense, the offender was motivated by prejudice based on race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. 49  
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(9) If the offense is a violation of section 2919.25 or a violation of section 2903.11, 2903.12, or 2903.13 of the Revised Code involving a person who was a family or household member at the time of the violation, the offender committed the offense in the vicinity of one or more children who are not victims of the offense, and the offender or the victim of the offense is a parent, guardian, custodian, or person in loco parentis of one or more of those children. 52  
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(C) The sentencing court shall consider all of the following that apply regarding the offender, the offense, or the victim, and any other relevant factors, as indicating that the offender's conduct is less serious than conduct normally constituting the offense: 60  
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(1) The victim induced or facilitated the offense. 65

(2) In committing the offense, the offender acted under strong provocation. 66  
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(3) In committing the offense, the offender did not cause or expect to cause physical harm to any person or property. 68  
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(4) There are substantial grounds to mitigate the offender's conduct, although the grounds are not enough to constitute a defense. 70  
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(D) The sentencing court shall consider all of the following that apply regarding the offender, and any other 73  
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relevant factors, as factors indicating that the offender is 75  
likely to commit future crimes: 76

(1) At the time of committing the offense, the offender 77  
was under release from confinement before trial or sentencing; 78  
was under a sanction imposed pursuant to section 2929.16, 79  
2929.17, or 2929.18 of the Revised Code; was under post-release 80  
control pursuant to section 2967.28 or any other provision of 81  
the Revised Code for an earlier offense or had been unfavorably 82  
terminated from post-release control for a prior offense 83  
pursuant to division (B) of section 2967.16 or section 2929.141 84  
of the Revised Code; was under transitional control in 85  
connection with a prior offense; or had absconded from the 86  
offender's approved community placement resulting in the 87  
offender's removal from the transitional control program under 88  
section 2967.26 of the Revised Code. 89

(2) The offender previously was adjudicated a delinquent 90  
child pursuant to Chapter 2151. of the Revised Code prior to 91  
January 1, 2002, or pursuant to Chapter 2152. of the Revised 92  
Code, or the offender has a history of criminal convictions. 93

(3) The offender has not been rehabilitated to a 94  
satisfactory degree after previously being adjudicated a 95  
delinquent child pursuant to Chapter 2151. of the Revised Code 96  
prior to January 1, 2002, or pursuant to Chapter 2152. of the 97  
Revised Code, or the offender has not responded favorably to 98  
sanctions previously imposed for criminal convictions. 99

(4) The offender has demonstrated a pattern of drug or 100  
alcohol abuse that is related to the offense, and the offender 101  
refuses to acknowledge that the offender has demonstrated that 102  
pattern, or the offender refuses treatment for the drug or 103  
alcohol abuse. 104

(5) The offender shows no genuine remorse for the offense.	105
(E) The sentencing court shall consider all of the following that apply regarding the offender, and any other relevant factors, as factors indicating that the offender is not likely to commit future crimes:	106
(1) Prior to committing the offense, the offender had not been adjudicated a delinquent child.	107
(2) Prior to committing the offense, the offender had not been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a criminal offense.	108
(3) Prior to committing the offense, the offender had led a law-abiding life for a significant number of years.	109
(4) The offense was committed under circumstances not likely to recur.	110
(5) <u>The Except as provided in division (G)(1) of this section, the</u> offender shows genuine remorse for the offense.	111
(F) The sentencing court shall consider the offender's military service record and whether the offender has an emotional, mental, or physical condition that is traceable to the offender's service in the armed forces of the United States and that was a contributing factor in the offender's commission of the offense or offenses.	112
<u>(G)(1) If the offender enters an Alford plea, the sentencing court shall not consider that the offender entered an Alford plea when determining whether an offender shows genuine remorse for the offense.</u>	113
<u>(2) The general assembly, in amending division (G) of this section pursuant to this act, hereby declares the purpose of the amendment is to address that Alford pleas are generally</u>	114

disfavored by courts of this state because Alford pleas do not 133  
determine the guilt or innocence of the offender. 134

**Sec. 2929.22.** (A) Unless a mandatory jail term is required 135  
to be imposed by division (G) of section 1547.99, division (B) 136  
of section 4510.14, division (G) of section 4511.19 of the 137  
Revised Code, or any other provision of the Revised Code a court 138  
that imposes a sentence under this chapter upon an offender for 139  
a misdemeanor or minor misdemeanor has discretion to determine 140  
the most effective way to achieve the purposes and principles of 141  
sentencing set forth in section 2929.21 of the Revised Code. 142

Unless a specific sanction is required to be imposed or is 143  
precluded from being imposed by the section setting forth an 144  
offense or the penalty for an offense or by any provision of 145  
sections 2929.23 to 2929.28 of the Revised Code, a court that 146  
imposes a sentence upon an offender for a misdemeanor may impose 147  
on the offender any sanction or combination of sanctions under 148  
sections 2929.24 to 2929.28 of the Revised Code. The court shall 149  
not impose a sentence that imposes an unnecessary burden on 150  
local government resources. 151

(B) (1) In determining the appropriate sentence for a 152  
misdemeanor, the court shall consider all of the following 153  
factors: 154

(a) The nature and circumstances of the offense or 155  
offenses; 156

(b) Whether the circumstances regarding the offender and 157  
the offense or offenses indicate that the offender has a history 158  
of persistent criminal activity and that the offender's 159  
character and condition reveal a substantial risk that the 160  
offender will commit another offense; 161

(c) Whether the circumstances regarding the offender and the offense or offenses indicate that the offender's history, character, and condition reveal a substantial risk that the offender will be a danger to others and that the offender's conduct has been characterized by a pattern of repetitive, compulsive, or aggressive behavior with heedless indifference to the consequences;

(d) Whether the victim's youth, age, disability, or other factor made the victim particularly vulnerable to the offense or made the impact of the offense more serious;

(e) Whether the offender is likely to commit future crimes in general, in addition to the circumstances described in divisions (B) (1) (b) and (c) of this section;

(f) Whether the offender has an emotional, mental, or physical condition that is traceable to the offender's service in the armed forces of the United States and that was a contributing factor in the offender's commission of the offense or offenses;

(g) The offender's military service record.

~~(2)~~ (2) (a) In determining the appropriate sentence for a misdemeanor, if the offender enters an Alford plea, the sentencing court shall not consider that the offender entered an Alford plea as a basis for determining whether the offender shows genuine remorse for the offense.

(b) The general assembly, in amending division (B) (2) of this section pursuant to this act, hereby declares the purpose of the amendment is to address that Alford pleas are generally disfavored by courts of this state because Alford pleas do not determine the guilt or innocence of the offender.

(3) In determining the appropriate sentence for a 191  
misdemeanor, in addition to complying with division (B) (1) of 192  
this section, the court may consider any other factors that are 193  
relevant to achieving the purposes and principles of sentencing 194  
set forth in section 2929.21 of the Revised Code. 195

(C) Before imposing a jail term as a sentence for a 196  
misdemeanor, a court shall consider the appropriateness of 197  
imposing a community control sanction or a combination of 198  
community control sanctions under sections 2929.25, 2929.26, 199  
2929.27, and 2929.28 of the Revised Code. A court may impose the 200  
longest jail term authorized under section 2929.24 of the 201  
Revised Code only upon offenders who commit the worst forms of 202  
the offense or upon offenders whose conduct and response to 203  
prior sanctions for prior offenses demonstrate that the 204  
imposition of the longest jail term is necessary to deter the 205  
offender from committing a future criminal offense. 206

(D) (1) A sentencing court shall consider any relevant oral 207  
and written statement made by the victim, the victim's 208  
representative, the victim's attorney, if applicable, the 209  
defendant, the defense attorney, and the prosecuting authority 210  
regarding sentencing for a misdemeanor. This division does not 211  
create any rights to notice other than those rights authorized 212  
by Chapter 2930. of the Revised Code. 213

(2) At the time of sentencing for a misdemeanor or as soon 214  
as possible after sentencing, the court shall notify the victim 215  
of the offense of the victim's right to file an application for 216  
an award of reparations pursuant to sections 2743.51 to 2743.72 217  
of the Revised Code. 218

**Section 2.** That existing sections 2929.12 and 2929.22 of 219  
the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 220