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REASONS WHY

*THE BILL TO ENABLE CONVICTS TO ASSIST IN
THE SUPPORT OF THEIR WIVES AND
CHILDREN SHOULD PASS.*

First.—The State, while inflicting punishment upon the criminal, should not unnecessarily inflict greater punishment upon his innocent wife and dependent children.

Second.—The criminal goes to prison, and from the day of his incarceration is furnished with food, clothing, fire and bed.

Third.—His wife and children, already humiliated by shame, cut off from their natural support, are forced in their weakness to find a livelihood the best way they can; the mother, to leave her children, needing her constant care, often locking them in to keep them from wandering, to go and earn their bread. If she is sick, as is often the case, the children, whether old enough to be in school or not, are compelled to go out and seek work. If they are too feeble, or work is not found, as is usually the case, they must suffer, beg, steal, or go to the Infirmary. The result is, that there comes to them, in addition to their shame, hunger, cold, disease, sickness, ignorance, pauperism and crime. Their suffering as compared with that of the father is a hundred fold more severe, and in its effects upon them and upon the State is far more disastrous. If they go to the Infirmary department, as thousands of them are

compelled to do, they go as paupers, in shame, their sense of independence dwarfed, and they readily learn the way. They see scores of others drawing bread and clothing from the public supply, and as they grow older they say: "Why should we work and labor when we can beg? If we fail as beggars the public will supply our wants." Of the more than 30,000 dependents and criminals in Ohio to-day, a large percentage are forced to lives of pauperism and crime by reason of the policy that appropriates the earnings of the prisoners sentenced to hard labor to the uses of the State, and withholding them from those by nature entitled to have them.

Fourth.—The State gains nothing by thus appropriating the labor of the prisoner. It receives but little more than it costs to keep and clothe him, while on the other hand private charity or the public purse must keep his family from starvation, while all the incentives about them are to pauperism and crime.

Fifth.—The moral effect of the policy of this bill upon both the prisoner and his family will be worth all it will cost to give it a full and fair trial. A man either under fierce temptation, intoxication or the heat of passion commits a crime. He is sentenced to imprisonment and hard labor for life or a term of years. He has a family to which, in greater or less degree, he is attached. Under the most rigid discipline, he labors as he never labored before. While he toils from morning till night, and the weeks and years pass by, he knows that his wife and children, in shame and degradation, are suffering for the necessities of life. Is it strange he goes to his daily task like the slave whipped and scourged to his dungeon? Will it not lighten the heavy burden his folly has brought upon him to compensate him, in part, for his labor, and enable him thus to clothe, feed, educate, and as far as he can by the sum allowed him, protect his family at home? With this opportunity, will he not go to his daily task with cheerfulness, and contemplate

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with pleasure how every penny that passes to his credit will lighten the burdens of those from whom he is separated? Will he not hail the practical workings of this bill as a most royal visitation to those who are in prison and in bonds?

Sixth.—Again, consider the effect on his family. To-day they are without support, poorly sheltered, more poorly clad, hungry, sick, growing up in ignorance and crime. The practical workings of this bill will shield them from a thousand ills, insure to his children a mother's care, give them shelter, fire, clothing, food, education, and through these a chance in the race that leads to virtuous lives and good citizenship. Last year the daily average in the Penitentiary and workhouses of the State was about 2,500. Estimating one-half of them to have families, we have about 1,250 families or about 5,000 inhabitants of the State who will receive the benefits of this bill. The earnings of each prisoner, appropriated by the bill, will be in round numbers \$200 per year. The total will be in round numbers \$240,000 per year. A levy on the grand duplicate of the State of fifteen one-hundredths of a mill will raise money sufficient to meet all its requirements.

Seventh.—It may be said that the State does not realize 60 cents per day, on the average, for the labor of her prisoners. Suppose that to be true. It is not because they do not labor hard or well. It is not because labor is not worth more than 60 cents per day. The object and purpose of the bill is to save the wife and children of the prisoner from want, pauperism and crime, and thus in the end save the State from greater burdens. It makes a great difference in the future of children whether they are supported upon the earnings of their parents, or receive that support from the overseers of the poor.

OFFICE TOLEDO HUMANE SOCIETY, }
February 11th, 1890.

MR. GRIFFIN,

(*By request of Toledo Humane Society.*)

A BILL

TO ENABLE CONVICTS TO ASSIST IN THE SUPPORT OF THEIR
WIVES AND CHILDREN.

SECTION 1.—Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, that whenever any person shall be convicted of a crime or offense in any of the courts of this State, any part of the punishment whereof shall be hard labor in any prison or workhouse in this State, it shall be the duty of the court in which such person shall be convicted to make enquiry, summoning witnesses if necessary, and make finding of the fact as to whether said person so convicted has a wife and child or children, or either, said children being under eighteen years of age, resident of this State, dependent for support in whole or part upon the labor of said person so convicted and, if so, the name, residence and postoffice address of each, and the age of such child or children, and said finding shall be made a part of the record in said case, and a copy thereof under the seal of said court shall by the clerk thereof, with the mittimus, be transmitted to the warden or superintendent of the prison or workhouse to which said person shall be sentenced, and also to the auditor of the county in which such person so convicted, at the time of his arrest, shall have a legal residence.

SEC. 2.—If it shall appear from said finding that such person so convicted has such wife and child or children, or either, such child or children being under eighteen years of age, residents of this State, who are dependent in whole or in part upon the labor of such convict for support, it shall be duty of such warden or superintendent of the prison or workhouse to which said person shall be sentenced and received, to credit said person so convicted, sentenced and received upon the books of said prison or workhouse, as the case may be, with the sum of 60 cents for each and every working day during his detention in said prison or workhouse under said sentence, which sum shall be paid monthly out of the treasury of the county where such conviction shall have taken place, provided said convict shall have a legal residence therein, otherwise out of the treasury of the county where said convict shall have a legal residence at the time of his arrest and conviction, upon the order of said warden or superintendent, as the case may be, upon the auditor of the county where such convict at the time of his arrest and conviction had a legal residence, and said auditor shall thereupon draw his warrant upon the treasurer of such county in favor first of the wife of said person so convicted, if it appear by said certified record that he has a wife in this State; and second, if it appear by said record that he has no wife in this State, then in favor of the guardian of said child or children, to be appointed by the Probate Court of the county in which they or any of them shall reside, which guardian shall be appointed to serve only during the time said person so convicted shall be imprisoned under said sentence. And it shall be the duty of said Probate Court appointing such guardian to certify his name and postoffice address to the said warden or superintendent, as the case may be, and to the auditor of the county in which said person so convicted shall, at the time of his arrest, have a legal residence, and the time that such person so convicted shall have been in the county where convicted, from the time of his arrest until his conviction, shall not be counted in fixing his legal residence therein.

SEC. 3.—For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act, the county commissioners of each county in this State are authorized and directed to provide by levy therefor, and for the year 1890 shall levy not less than fifteen one-hundredths of a mill on the dollar of the general tax duplicate of said county.

SEC. 4.—This act shall take effect on its passage.