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The Honorable Nathan Manning
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Manning:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 141, sponsored by Representatives Jonathan Dever and Scott Wiggam. This bill seeks to hold drug dealers accountable for their actions, permitting them to be charged with involuntary manslaughter for providing a controlled substance that causes or contributes to the death of another person.

Last year in Ohio, we lost 4,050 individuals to drug overdoses. This is a 32.8 percent increase over the 3,050 deaths that occurred in 2015. Trends emerging from the first half of this year are even more disturbing due to the surge in our communities of lethal combinations of fentanyl and carfentanil mixed with cocaine and other drugs. In 2010, our Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) had only 34 cases of fentanyl, but in 2016, BCI had 2,396 cases. More fentanyl came through BCI in 2016 than had come through in the previous five years combined!

The deadly variant carfentanil, a large animal tranquilizer, was suspected in a spike of overdoses in areas around Akron and Cincinnati last year. Again, BCI went from zero cases of carfentanil in 2015 to 214 cases in 2016, and as of October 1, 2017, BCI has had 617 cases.

In 2016, more than half – 58.2 percent or 2,357 – of all unintentional drug overdoses involved fentanyl and related-drugs, such as carfentanil. That's a stunning rise over the 1,155 deaths in 2015 or, looking back even further, the 75 deaths in 2012. Simply put, drug dealers are responsible for the spread of these lethal drugs to Ohioans and the devastating impact they have on our state, our families, and our children.

The drug epidemic is being fought on many fronts throughout Ohio, and the ability to hold drug dealers accountable for overdose deaths would be a significant tool for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges. I strongly support House Bill 141 and encourage the General Assembly to enact this important piece of legislation.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General