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State Representative Rick Perales
Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

Criminal Justice Committee
House Bill 405 Sponsor Testimony
Representative Rep. Rick Perales
Counterfeiting
December 5th, 2017

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 405 which establishes counterfeiting a corrupt activity crime.

The Opioid Epidemic has devastated our loved ones and communities. There are few Ohioans who have not been touched by this travesty, either directly or indirectly through family, friends, and neighbors. At the heart of this epidemic is the underground economy that puts illegal money making schemes over the welfare of our communities. Many may not realize that this issue floods Ohio with counterfeit currency by criminals that recognize the absence of a criminally enforceable law prohibiting such acts. I am here today to bring our fight against the Opioid Epidemic to the next level, by attacking the financial source.

The U.S. Secret Service, the federal law enforcement entity tasked with investigating federal counterfeiting crimes and enforcing the federal laws pertaining to counterfeiting,

brought the need for this bill to my attention. Secret Service Resident Agent in Charge Kevin Dye and I have been working this issue for nearly a year. The secret service observed that Ohio was one of ten states that did not have statutes that specifically addressed counterfeiting. The U.S. Secret Service has seen a significant increase in counterfeit crimes directly linked to narcotics cases in Ohio. Agent Dye estimates more than 85% of counterfeiting investigations in Ohio are tied to illicit drug activity.

This new law will set the standard for violations of manufacturing U.S. Currency and Credit/Debit Cards, which the Ohio Revised Code fails to address. HB 405 will clearly identify criminal conduct associated with counterfeiting, significantly aiding Ohio Law Enforcement Officers and Deputies, and reducing the charging irregularities that currently exist throughout the State.

I have been in contact with several law enforcement agencies as I was developing this legislation. There has been overwhelming support from the Ohio Attorney General's Office, the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Public Safety, and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police.

The legislation addresses the urgent health disaster that is Ohio's Opioid Epidemic. We must make a difference for the thousands of families affected by this tragedy. We must address it from all fronts- Prevention, Enforcement, Treatment, and Post-Addiction Care to name a few. This bill will address the previously untapped prevention aspect of counterfeiting. That is why I am calling on the legislature to open up this new offensive

in the War on Drugs. This legislation will hit the illicit trade where it hurts the most, while keeping counterfeit funds out of Ohio's economy. Let us work together with our state law enforcement and support our Federal counterparts in the U.S. Secret Service, and end Opioid's foothold in our Ohio communities.

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the committee. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 405. I will be glad to answer any questions.