

House Bill 457 Testimony

Linda Chambers

02/27/2018

Criminal Justice Committee

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and Members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on HB 457. My name is Linda Chambers. This bill is named for my son, Scottie Childers, and would require an individual who is subject to probation and parole sanctions to be sent to jail or a treatment facility if they test positive for heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil.

My son Scottie was 31 years old and a father of 5 daughters. In 2012, after his wife gave birth to twins, they both became addicted to pain pills. I confronted him about it, and he went to treatment and got sober. There he was prescribed Suboxone strip which was to help with the withdrawal of the pain pills. We noticed a change in Scottie and found that he gotten addicted to Suboxone which lead to Heroin, as this was cheaper and easier to get. Scottie went to jail in 2015 for almost four months. Greene County kept him there in jail until a bed opened up in a treatment center. After several months, Scottie got the opportunity to go to the treatment center, and came out strong and sober, and on probation in Greene County. However, when problems started occurring in his personal life, he relapsed and overdosed in a parking lot in Montgomery County. Scottie was found with 14 capsules of heroin. His probation officer in Greene County put him in jail for violation of probation. He was then indicted in Montgomery County for the 14 capsules and released to Montgomery County probation. There he went to a STOP treatment program for three months. Scottie was released right before Thanksgiving in 2016 and seemed to be doing well. Scottie, accompanied by one of his brothers, went to probation to check in on January 27, 2017 and had a positive result on his drug test. Scottie was released without any consequence even though he tested positive for drugs. Four hours later, he used again and passed away. This was a shock to myself and my family how he could test positive and there would be no consequence with being on probation. We were unaware that he had a relapse and a violation would have made us aware of his use. We will never know if this system had worked as intended if this would have been the time that saved his life and he lived 50 more years.

As a mother, I am heartbroken and cannot describe to you the pain I have felt over the past year. I am outraged that after testing positive for drugs with being on probation for drug possession, that Scottie was released even though the probation office was aware of his circumstances. Had it not been for this lack of accountability, my son would not have gotten the chance to use again

four hours later that same day. Jail would have been the safest place for him. As a citizen, I am outraged that any person on probation or parole can test positive for heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil and be allowed to leave with no accountability or recourse. With this law we take the discretion away from probation and parole officers for these drugs that are killing so many citizens. We currently do not have enough residential treatment facilities to accommodate the need that exists in Ohio. Because of this, those struggling with substance abuse who test positive for heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil need to have somewhere to go in the meantime, and going to jail would keep them safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 457. I would be happy to answer any questions.