



**State Representative Thomas E. West
Sponsor Testimony (As Prepared) – House Bill 614**

West

Good Morning Chairman Manning, Vice Chair XXXX, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony this afternoon on House Bill 614, legislation that provides immunity from certain drug paraphernalia offenses to people who call 911 for someone who is overdosing or if they themselves are overdosing.

During the 131st General Assembly, Ohio passed the Good Samaritan Statute, which granted immunity to people who call for medical assistance for someone overdosing on heroin, opioids or other drugs and the person who overdosed. It prevents them from being arrested or punished for minor drug offenses but does not include immunity from being charged for certain offenses involving drug paraphernalia.

After speaking with EMS and other professionals on the frontline of the opioid epidemic, it became clear to me that if we want to save lives during this terrible public health crisis, we must include drug paraphernalia offenses in the Good Samaritan law. In doing so, people will be more likely to do the right thing and call for medical assistance during an overdose. A call for immediate medical assistance can make the difference between life or death- let's encourage people to save a life, not fear punishment for doing the right thing. Thank you for allowing me to speak about this important bill. I will be happy to take any questions the committee may have.