



Representative Stephen A. Huffman
80th House District

House Bill 145 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 145. This bill will create a confidential reporting program for treating impaired practitioners in Ohio. The current reporting system requires the majority of medical practitioners to report substance abuse by peers to the State Medical Board. This requirement has created an environment where peers are hesitant to report colleagues because doing so could potentially result in disciplinary action by the Medical Board, and may strip individuals of their license to practice.

The goal of reporting practitioners should be to get them properly treated, so that they can return to practicing medicine. House Bill 145 will create a system where practitioners will have a safe opportunity to get the help that they need. House Bill 145 creates a new and improved “one bite” program, while still allowing the State Medical Board and monitoring providers to properly oversee the rehabilitation of impaired practitioners (which includes but is not limited to anesthetists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, mental health professionals, and others).

A practitioner is eligible to participate in the program if they are not impaired, have not been previously sanctioned (unless referred to the program by the state medical board), and have not previously participated in the program. The State Medical Board will contract with both a third party treatment and monitoring provider to administer the program.

While in the program, participants are required to suspend practice and must comply with all terms and conditions for successful completion. The end period of the program, as specified by the treatment provider, cannot be less than 30 days. In order to formally complete the program and be granted authority to resume practice, participants must receive consent from the treatment and monitoring provider. Once the individual has completed the program, both the treatment and

monitoring provider will continue to monitor the individual for a period agreed upon by the State Medical Board and providers.

We have met with several groups including the Ohio State Medical Association, the State Medical Board and others, to ensure that the legislative changes in H.B. 145 are appropriate and enforceable. The purpose of this legislation is to strengthen “one bite” in such a way that will encourage more physicians to seek out care and to successfully recover from addiction. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.