

Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 144
Representative Marlene Anielski
House Judiciary Committee
April 21, 2015

Chair Butler, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Stinziano, and members of the House Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 144. I am pleased to be a joint sponsor of this important legislation with Representative Sykes. The legislation serves as companion legislation to Senate Bill 113 being offered by Senators LaRose and Beagle.

House Bill 144 establishes procedures for the remediation of properties on which a meth lab has been discovered. Currently, Ohio does not clarify responsibilities related to the cleanup of sites or have any protocols in place.

The process to produce methamphetamine is rather simple and ingredients used in the cook can be easily purchased. Although the “recipes” can vary, some of the most commonly used ingredients are acetone, pseudoephedrine, anti-freeze, drain cleaner, sodium hydroxide, and anhydrous ammonia which are toxic and highly flammable. Brake fluid is commonly used as it contains toluene which is used to form the meth crystals. The fumes released can cause brain damage or death. When cooking, the fumes are released into the air to seep into walls, wood floors, carpeting, and other porous surfaces. Each pound of meth produced can yield up to six pounds of waste, which are often haphazardly dumped- endangering communities and the environment.

The surge of meth labs we have seen across the state can be attributed to the relative ease and portability of the cooks. “Shake and bake” labs are becoming increasingly common both in Ohio and nationwide, which is where meth is cooked in a two liter pop bottle. This method requires only a few pseudoephedrine pills making it easy to skirt around laws restricting the sale of large quantities of decongestants and requires little room, thus making the process portable. Users are making meth while in their cars and throwing the used bottles out the window into yards and trashcans. However, the process is extremely dangerous. At times, when the bottle is shaken incorrectly, or the lid is loosened too quickly, or if oxygen seeps in, the bottle can explode. If a standard brick and mortar meth lab catches on fire, the users can attempt to run away, but with this new method, they are actually holding the bottle when it explodes.

The goal of House Bill 144 is to help protect people from being exposed to these dangerous chemicals. The need for this legislation was made all too clear to me after being approached by local police and fire chiefs in my district. They responded to a discovery of a home that had been used to cook and produce meth, but had no clean up protocols or standards to follow. It is crucial that we address the ever increasing meth use and production, by putting forth set safety standards before more innocent people suffer from accidental exposure.

House Bill 144 requires the Department of Health to develop process-based standards and procedures for meth lab remediation standards. Furthermore, it calls on local enforcement officials, local boards of health, certified clean up specialists, and property owners to work together to protect Ohioans from these dangerous chemicals.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of House Bill 144. Representative Sykes and I welcome any questions you may have today.