

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HEALTH COMMITTEE  
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
REGARDING HOUSE BILL 345  
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January 17, 2018

Chairman Huffman and members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for House Bill 345, which would enact Section 3799.01 of the Ohio Revised Code to adopt the Solemn Covenant of the States to award prizes for curing diseases.

I live near Dayton, Ohio and am a registered pharmacist with a Ph.D. in biopharmaceutics, specializing in pharmacology, toxicology, and drug kinetics. Based on my 42 years as a pharmacist I know that very few drugs are truly curative. Instead, pharmaceutical companies design and promote drugs for lifelong use to ensure steady revenue.

A 2015 study in *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association) revealed that 59 percent of adults take prescription drugs, with 15 percent taking five or more drugs every day, so-called polypharmacy. Since no drug is free of side effects, additional drugs are often prescribed to address side effects of other drugs. If such extensive prescription drug use made people healthy, why don't the patients ever seem to come off the drugs?

This situation is not only bad for patients, but for taxpayers. As you know, Medicaid is the single-largest program in the Ohio budget, a large fraction of which is prescription drugs for serious chronic conditions.

During the recent 2017 Ohio drug price ballot issue, drug companies spent nearly \$57 million to defeat Issue 2. To spend this much money on one state issue shows that the drug industry feared losing much more if the issue had passed. Considering that the drug and health products industry holds the top spot of all industries in lobbying federal politicians and federal agencies, spending nearly \$250 million on these activities in 2016 alone, I was not surprised by how much money drug companies spent in Ohio in 2017 against Issue 2.

A 2016 analysis by Reuters found that list prices for the best-selling drugs in the U.S. rose from 50 to 1200 percent in five years, outpacing price increases for hospitals and doctors.

House Bill 345 attempts to stem this unsustainable drug price trajectory by giving private industry financial incentive to develop curative drugs or treatments, not just the status quo medicine which treats only symptoms. The Cure Bill includes checks and balances to protect taxpayers and, if enacted, will save taxpayer dollars and improve both the fiscal and physical health of Ohioans. I strongly urge you to support House Bill 345.