

WITNESS TESTIMONY FOR 1/31/2018

HB 345 “CURE BILL”

- Proponent Testimony by Jami S. Oliver, Esq.

Esteemed Committee Members:

My name is Jami Oliver and I have been practicing law in Ohio for 24 years. I have spent the past five years performing charity work, specifically geared toward advocacy and funding for pancreatic cancer. However, I am not here on behalf of any organization but instead am here as a concerned citizen and constituent of Union County, Ohio.

I am not an expert in the medical field nor am I a statistician or actuarial accountant. I cannot provide you with the specific dollar amount that this State or others pay on behalf of citizens who are receiving treatments for diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, Crohn’s disease, autoimmune disorders, cancer, etc. but I know that the numbers are staggering and that this country is in a health crisis.

Ohio is faced with a unique opportunity, thanks to the work of Representative Butler and others, to change direction. To take us from a system that rewards private industry for keeping people on drugs and other treatment regimens to one that maximizes rewards for finding and developing the cure to those diseases. While this is an innovative approach to healthcare, no great discoveries have ever come without someone thinking outside the box. This is a proposal that can and will work with the appropriate safeguards in place. I believe that this committee is savvy enough to identify those safeguards, such as the integrity of the States Commission- once it is established - and through them, important items such as the criteria for determining when a drug has become a patentable “cure” and the reward for the cure based upon the State’s “savings” for treatment. Those are manageable “litmus” tests that this honorable body has put into place many times before in scores of other legislative enactments.

All I can speak of personally is the research over the past 50 years in pancreatic cancer. I lost my grandmother when I was a year old. I don’t remember her, but I’m sure we met. She was only 47 years old when she died of pancreas cancer. 42 years later my uncle and my mother died of pancreas cancer at the ages of 68 and 64. The astonishing part of this story is that in those 42 years, there was no progress made toward a cure. None. There were not even any new drugs to treat pancreas cancer and no early detection at all. Why? Perhaps because the number of people diagnosed in those years was relatively low and new drugs would not be widely prescribed? That’s probable. But now pancreas cancer rates have skyrocketed, and new drugs are now being developed for the first time ever. There are more people who are sick and more people (and state governments) who will buy those drugs. If this breakthrough Bill had been law twenty years ago, I cannot imagine how many deadly diseases could have been eradicated and how many billions of dollars would have been saved. Can you

imagine spending that money on children? The elderly? Education? Business and enterprise innovation? Preservation of natural resources?

I urge the Committee to let this country know that Ohio is not going to sit by passively and watch our money go to waste prolonging lives that are riddled with pain, sadness and loss of hope due to incurable diseases. Please vote in the affirmative for HB 345 to find a Cure.

Thank you.