



Representative Scott Wiggam
1st House District

Representative Phil Plummer
40th House District

Chairman Eklund, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for a resolution to urge the federal government to designate certain transnational criminal organizations, commonly known as cartels, as foreign terrorist organizations.

By designating drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, the Federal government would have at its disposal- enhanced intelligence capabilities, the ability to freeze financial assets of the cartels, and if necessary, enhanced military options- such as equipment, assets, and personnel.

In previous years, over a billion dollars has been spent fighting the opioid epidemic on the back end and it is time for us to approach this issue on the frontlines.¹ Many of us, in some way, shape, or form, have come in contact with individuals, or their family and friends, who have become afflicted by opioids. These individuals come from all walks of life, including children and young adults. These individuals live in neighborhoods of varying demographics– low, middle, and high income, in both urban and rural areas. This epidemic does not discriminate based on age, skin color, education, income, or neighborhood.

¹ Toledo Blade, “Health officials: Medicaid cuts could slow fight against opioid epidemic”, 1-4.

Ohio sits at the epicenter of a national opioid crisis. Yesterday, I conducted a quick Google search and quickly found six articles that described that law enforcement officials have seized enough fentanyl to kill half of the citizens of Ohio. Each of these drug seizures had direct connections to trans-national criminal organizations. For example, in the past 12 months alone, cartel-linked drug trafficking has been running rampant in Ohio's major cities and we all need to focus our attention on this alarming influx of lethal narcotics into our State's borders. In July 2018, the Dayton Daily News reported the seizure of 15.5 lbs of fentanyl linked to a satellite operation of the Ramirez cartel located in Dayton, Columbus, and Cincinnati.² In October 2018, the Cincinnati Enquirer reported the arrest of a Middletown man who was known to be the ring-leader of a local fentanyl operation with ties to the Sinaloa cartel.³ In December of 2018, Fox 45 Dayton reported the seizure of 56 lbs of fentanyl, 21 lbs of heroin, and 26 lbs of cocaine in Montgomery County, OH which is said to have the power to kill over 2.5 million individuals alone.⁴

This resolution expresses the desire of the State of Ohio to have the Federal Government designate transnational organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations pursuant to 8 USC 1189, to allow the government of the United States to use appropriate means to eliminate and/or mitigate the operations of these organizations which have such a profound negative impact upon the wellbeing of our citizens. By designating these criminal organizations as foreign terrorist organizations, the Federal government would have at its disposal, if it so chooses, enhanced intelligence capabilities, the ability to freeze financial assets of the cartels, the ability to pursue those who provide material support to the cartels, and if necessary, enhanced military options- such as equipment, assets, and personnel.

² Dayton Daily News, "Mexican chemist involved in major area meth bust that officials say continues long-term investigation", 5.

³ Cincinnati Enquirer, "Sinaloa drug cartel: Middletown man was 'ring leader' for fentanyl operation, feds say", 2.

⁴ Fox 45 Dayton, "Bulk Smuggling Task Force gets 103 pounds of fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin off Ohio streets", 4.

Thank you again, Chairman Eklund, for the opportunity to speak on behalf of House Concurrent Resolution 10, which I feel is a matter of grave urgency. I would also like to thank my joint sponsor, Representative Phil Plummer for lending his law enforcement expertise. And thank you Chairman Lang of the Criminal Justice Committee and his staff for their work.