



**State Representative Thomas E. West
49th Ohio House District**

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 135

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo and members of the Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 135.

Rep. Manchester illustrated very well the problems patients encounter with “accumulator adjustment” clauses or other similar efforts by health plans to prevent patients from using various forms of copay assistance.

Simply put, these policies preventing copay assistance put patients in a very difficult position, particularly those with rare conditions that often require expensive medication and high cost-sharing. This assistance – whether it be from drug manufacturers, churches, charities or even a family member – is critical both for these patients and for those with more common conditions to meet their financial obligations.

I've heard stories of patients rationing drugs or going without a dose to make their prescriptions last longer – no one should be put in this position, caught between a rock and a hard place. A constituent of mine with a rare bleeding disorder has lived this experience, along with countless others across our state.

That is why my joint sponsor and I are so keen on bringing House Bill 135 forward. Conversations around this bill have been happening in some form or fashion for a few years now, so the time for action has come. We have a diverse group of healthcare providers, patient advocates, and others in the healthcare space who have lined up in support of House Bill 135 and the patient protections it would provide. This coalition has only grown since last year.

We must come together to ensure that patients have access to copay assistance and all the other tools they need to live healthy, productive lives right here at home. Thank you, and Rep. Manchester and I would now be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.