

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston and members of the Ohio House Health committee thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 715.

Prescription drug prices have increased nearly 180% from 2003 to 2020. In 2003 Congress passed the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA), which authorized the commercial importation of prescription drugs from Canada. The MMA laid the groundwork that would later allow individual states to establish their own Canadian Drug Importation Programs.

On average, the United States pays twice as much for prescriptions compared to other high-income developed nations. In an effort to lower drug prices for consumers across Ohio, we have introduced legislation that would allow the State of Ohio to contract with an experienced, private company to arrange for the importation of drugs from a Canadian seller.

It is important to note that prescriptions are required to either be surplus or produced in excess of what Canadian manufacturers normally make to avoid negative impact on Canada's internal supply. However, the

imported drugs are still held to the same standards of quality assurance as if they were produced in the US or imported from another country using criteria that satisfies the FDA safety and effectiveness standards. Additionally, the 3rd party contracted with must have assisted ten or more states in developing, establishing or administering similar programs.

This bill is based on the drug importation program as established by Florida. This program would allow for great efficiency, a closed supply chain, easier reporting, visibility, and accountability, and greater safety. This bill will expand access to affordable, accessible prescription medication to populations across Ohio who are most in need. In addition, this legislation would include a toll free number to answer questions surrounding this program as well as online info and include lifesaving medicines such as insulin and epinephrine.

As of 2022, there are currently 23 other states that are pursuing legislation to enact a Canadian Drug Importation Program.

Lastly, this bill appropriates \$2 million from the General Revenue Fund to establish the Prescription Drug Importation Program. While this may seem like a great deal of money, it should be noted that the savings incurred by this bill are far greater. This bill addresses prescription drug shortages that often send individuals to emergency rooms in order to receive the life-saving drugs they require. By expanding access, we are able to mitigate a great number of those instances. In addition, individuals will not be forced to ration their medication, skip doses, or go completely without as the importation process will make more medications available to more people at less cost to the state and the consumer.

Thank you for your time, I would be happy to answer any questions.