



HB 558 Testimony – Kylynn Johnson – State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 558. My name is Kylynn Johnson, and I am the Policy and Public Affairs Liaison for the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy.

House Bill 558 seeks to increase access to affordable prescription medications for uninsured and underinsured Ohioans. Specifically, the bill would expand Ohio's drug repository program by authorizing the donation of medications to charitable pharmacies and non-profit clinics that have been in the possession of the end-user.

While there are several representatives here from Ohio's charitable pharmacies that can speak to the need for expanding this program, I would like to take a moment to address oversight, safe handling, and immunity protections.

Regarding oversight, all entities that participate in Ohio's drug repository program are licensed and regulated by the Board. Each year our field staff conduct approximately 2,000 inspections of licensed facilities, which include Ohio's charitable pharmacies. This allows Board staff to identify and correct violations of law and rule to ensure that Ohio patients are afforded quality care.

To address safe handling, the legislation provides the Board with the ability to promulgate rules for the expansion of the program. This includes the implementation of standards governing the safe handling of donated medications, requirements for visual inspection by a licensed pharmacist, and proper recordkeeping to ensure accountability. Additionally, the bill prohibits the donation of controlled substance medications, which include opioids such as fentanyl, to ensure Ohio complies with federal law.

Lastly, the Board recognizes the need to maintain existing civil and criminal immunity protections for program participants. As listed in lines 145-199 of the bill, those protections remain for those donating medications as well as those who are operating a repository program.

Chair Huffman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 558. The Board is proud to support common-sense legislation that would expand the safety net for Ohioans who have trouble accessing life-sustaining medications needed to live healthy and prosperous lives. I would welcome any questions you may have at this time.

