

SB 288

Proponent Testimony

Billy Golden

2/28/22

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony for the Good Samaritan provisions of SB 288, as well as offering 3 additional amendments.

My name is Billy Golden and I am someone that has worked in harm reduction since 2014 and has been practicing harm reduction since 2001. I support expansion of Ohio's Good Samaritan law is important to me because more protective measures will allow more people to feel comfortable calling 911 in the event of an overdose.

When working direct services in harm reduction in Cincinnati, OH I heard multiple stories about overdoses and people's experience with emergency services as well as their reasons for not calling 911. One particular story stands out from an SSP participant that I will call "John." John had a small party at his house. A young woman he did not know well, overdosed in his bathroom. John used the limited Naloxone he had to reverse the overdose but the overdose was not reversed. John called 911 and was arrested on paraphernalia charges. He spent days in jail where he went through painful withdrawal. Fortunately, he knew he was at greater risk of overdose since his opioid tolerance had decreased so he was able to avoid overdose himself. When I next saw John, he relayed the story and then told me that under no circumstance would he call 911 again. Sadly, this story is not an isolated incident. If we want people to feel safe calling 911 to report an overdose we need to eliminate any barriers that may stand in their way and we need a stronger community education effort around how the law works.

Again, I support expansion of Ohio's Good Samaritan law. Thank you for hearing my testimony. I urge you to approve the Good Samaritan provisions in SB 288.

Sincerely,

Billy Golden

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