



SB 288

Proponent Testimony

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02/28/2022

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.

We are people of faith, and we believe that people who use drugs are made in the image of God, and matter to God. We must help to protect the lives of people who use drugs and make Ohio a true Good Samaritan State. People should never be penalized for saving a life.

BASICS

Good Samaritan legislation is meant to protect people from prosecution for low level drug possession when they call for help in the event of an overdose. This is intended to encourage people to call for help and save lives. Unfortunately, Ohio's legislation is very limited.

[Senator Manning](#), Dist 13, introduced [SB 288](#) which would expand Ohio's current Good Samaritan law to also cover drug paraphernalia. This is a start, and with a few amendments it can really accomplish the goals that we want from a Good Samaritan Law — saving as many lives as possible, without increasing incarceration, criminalizing people or straining law enforcement. The broader the protection, the more lives that are saved.

Our 3 Requested Revisions

1. Remove restrictions for those on parole and probation (community control or post release-control).

a. Main Points:

- i. Any restrictions on Good Samaritan policy will result in the loss of lives that could be saved. We are here to save every life.
- ii. Those under community control and post release-control need this legislation the most, as they are the most fearful of calling authorities.
- iii. People released from prison and jail are at heightened risk of overdose after release
- iv. The highest increase of overdose death rates in Ohio are among Black men. Black men are overrepresented in Ohio's carceral system and so are underrepresented in protection from the Good Samaritan policy.

2. Remove limitations on how many times an individual can receive the immunity.

a. Main Points:

- i. There should be no limits on how many times you can save a life.
- ii. In hard-hit communities, some people are responding to more than two overdoses in a week, sometimes even in a day.
- iii. Let those in a position to save the most lives, save the most lives.
- iv. There should never be a penalty for saving a life.

3. Remove treatment assessment requirements.

a. Main Points:

- i. Not all those who are in possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia are addicted to drugs or in need of treatment.
- ii. Requiring treatment creates an unnecessary burden on treatment centers that are already working beyond capacity. Slots in these facilities should go to people who need treatment and are ready for it.
- iii. Treatment is most successful when it is voluntary.