



Greetings:

Chairman Ghabari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the House Homeland Security, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 230.

Introduction:

My name is Dennis Eng. I am the Treasurer for the Ohio Task Force Commanders Association and I am the Director of the Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (A.C.E.) Task Force which is also a HIDTA Task Force. I have been in law enforcement for approximately 26 years. I retired from the FBI with 22 years of service. When I was at the FBI, I conducted investigations related to organized crime, violent street gangs, Mexican Drug Cartels, terrorists, and counterintelligence. While at the FBI, I had the opportunity to travel to the border and interview Mexican Cartel members on how they were transporting narcotics across the border into the U.S. and then to Dayton, OH.

As the Director of the Greene County A.C.E. Task Force, I serve the community of Greene County which is located adjacent to Dayton, OH located in Montgomery County. Greene County's population is approximately 169,000 and has the pleasure of being the home to Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The Greene County A.C.E. Task Force has been in existence since 1986 and has a long history in Ohio Task Forces. The Greene County A.C.E. Task Force consists of detectives from the Greene County Sheriff's Office, Xenia Police Division, Fairborn Police Department, and Beavercreek Police Department, part time Ohio Adult Parole Offices, and Special Agents from the FBI and ATF along with an Ohio National Guard Analyst.

Proposed Legislation Remarks:

House Bill 230 will greatly help Ohio by increasing the penalties for Fentanyl drug traffickers and prohibit organized trafficking of persons. Ohio is ranked nationally as a leader in drug overdose deaths in the U.S. In 2021, Ohio had 5,406 overdose deaths whereas nationally there were 106,699. In 2021, Greene County had 188 drug overdoses and 47 deaths which contributed to 6.05% of nationwide overdose deaths in Ohio. The main contributor to the overdoses in Greene County and Ohio continues to be Fentanyl. Just this year, Greene County has seen an increase in calls for overdoses and we have had several incidences of overdose at the county jail with one individual smuggling in Fentanyl in the jail which caused two inmates to overdose and, in another incident, two correctional officers were exposed to what is believed to be Fentanyl and sent to the hospital. Since Fentanyl is the major killing substance for many people in Ohio and the U.S., we need to increase our state penalties for drug traffickers and dealers to reflect those of federal charging guidelines.



Moving on to address the other part of House Bill 230 pertaining to prohibiting organized trafficking of persons. This part of the house bill is essential as Ohio is ranked 5th in 2022 in the U.S. for human trafficking incidents. The victims are forced into prostitution and other sex businesses i.e., the pornography industry and illegal massage parlors. White females in Ohio between the ages of 21 and 29 are 98% of the victims of sex trafficking. Other victims are forced into labor trafficking working in factories, agriculture, and retail. Currently, our task force is working on several human trafficking cases, where Asian females are working at illegal massage parlors performing sex acts. These Asian females through our investigation are coming from New York and Chicago. When I worked at the FBI, I worked on an Asian Organized Crime Squad where families from China would pool their money together to send family members with “Snake Heads” to smuggle them into the U.S. to obtain a better life. However, when they arrive in the U.S., the Asian females are forced into sex trafficking or work at Chinese restaurants or businesses to work off their debt. While working at the Chinese restaurants, the females would relay information about the owners so the organized group could conduct home invasions or rob the owners. I have seen violent photographs of a group that I was investigating that brutally beat the wife and husband to a bloody pulp while their kids watched. The Asian organized crime groups will force the victims to commit financial fraud across the U.S. by taking stolen identities to purchase high-value items and bring them back to the crime groups in New York. They would tell their victims that they are working off their debt. Knowing well that payment was taken care of when their families had paid their way to the U.S. House Bill 230 will help detour human trafficking in Ohio.

If House Bill 230 is passed through this committee and House, it will be another asset that Ohio law enforcement and task forces can use to combat Fentanyl drug traffickers by increasing their penalties to higher levels which makes it less attractive to distribute Fentanyl and reduce overdoses in Ohio. House Bill 230 will give law enforcement in Ohio a tool to utilize to prevent and deter human trafficking.

Closing:

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony, I will now stand for questions.