



Ohio Senate Education Committee

Proponent Testimony on SB205

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Brown County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services
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Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 205. My name is Deanna Vietze, and I am the Executive Director of the Brown County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services as well as a member of the Executive Council of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.

I want to start by expressing our gratitude to Senator Johnson for sponsoring this bill and introducing this important piece of legislation. Senator Johnson serves my district and has been a tremendous advocate for behavioral health and wellness in our communities.

Too often with behavioral health we are reactive; not proactive. Educating early and often is a proactive approach that can have a positive lifelong impact. SB205 will ensure that all Ohio school-aged children receive evidenced based curricula annually that provides information: to educate on the risks associated with substance abuse for both illicit and legal substances, even in isolated incidents, to make informed decisions about use, to avoid risky situations, to equip with refusal skills when confronted, and to build skills to avoid, stop or even seek help for substance abuse.

Including the evidence-based component will ensure that all students are being taught effective and efficient approaches that are proven to avoid unintended consequences and to illicit the desired outcome of reducing substance misuse and abuse.

Education is the most powerful weapon we can utilize to effect change. SB205 is a positive addition to our arsenal to reduce negative consequences from substance use disorders, therefore I urge the committee to support SB205. Ohio lost 4915 residents in 2022 due to unintentional death by overdose. How many of those could have been prevented?

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 937-378-3504 or dvietze@bcmhas.org.