



Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee,

My name is Christopher Hernandez, a current assistant professor of pharmacy practice at The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy and a clinical pharmacist at central Ohio's largest federally qualified health center, an institution dedicated to serving the underserved population of Ohio.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 73 (HB 73). This bill assumes that pharmacists would be most worried about the legality of filling an off-label prescription, while patient safety is the utmost priority. In addition, my concern is for the patients I see daily in my clinic, those underserved and often forgotten.

I strongly oppose this bill because while there is evidence for off-label use of medications in some therapeutic areas, it is by no means a blanket statement. While this bill pardons a pharmacist from legality, that is not the issue. The concern is patient safety and will always be patient safety. This bill will also negatively impact those I see every day: patients with low health literacy, a low understanding of their conditions, and who are highly influenced by social media trends.

In addition, validating a physician-patient relationship is a vague statement, and I see this bill fueling the term “doctor shopping.” Instead of patients finding a specialist in their condition willing to use scientific evidence to find novel therapies, they will seek a physician who will prescribe them something they want instead of need. This model of prescribing is what we saw during the opioid epidemic. Patients are seeking a cure for their pain and physicians are readily available to provide the script the patient wants instead of needs.

Today, there is misinformation everywhere. I am undoubtedly sure you have been impacted by it in any way. As a clinical pharmacist with prescribing authority, I see this misinformation daily in the clinic. The medical community is a safe haven for patients. This bill takes advantage of patients' vulnerability and prioritizes legality instead of safety.

Thank you, Chairman Huffman, and members of the committee, for allowing me to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 73.

Most respectfully,

Christopher Hernandez, PharmD, BCACP
Assistant Professor-Practice

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