



### **Greetings:**

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 194.

### **Introduction:**

My name is Dennis Eng. I am the Treasurer for the Ohio Task Force Commanders Association and 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.

As the Director of the Greene County A.C.E. Task Force, I serve the Greene County community adjacent to Dayton, OH located in Montgomery County. The Greene County A.C.E. Task Force was established in 1986 and has a long history in the 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, part time Ohio Investigative Unity, and Special Agents from the FBI and ATF along with an Ohio National Guard Analyst.

### **Proposed Legislation Remarks:**

While I was a Special Agent with the FBI, I worked closely with local and state drug task forces and observed firsthand how critical they are to the communities they serve. Local and state drug task forces have a long history of protecting and serving their communities and they are often the first line of defense in investigating drug traffickers, ranging from street-level dealers to mid-level operators, and in some cases, even Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Task Forces serve their communities by providing assistance and resources to their law enforcement agencies that are unable to or do not have the capabilities of conducting complex drug investigations.

House Bill 194 will significantly help Ohio's drug task forces by providing much-needed funding to combat the drug epidemic that has devastated Ohio. The deadly substances being distributed by Mexican drug cartels—such as fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine laced with Xylazine and other animal tranquilizers—are wreaking havoc on our communities.



Over the past several years, Ohio drug task forces have seen substantial reductions in grant funding, which has put a serious strain on their ability to operate. Ohio counties, towns, and cities are struggling with their own fiscal budgets to provide any funding to their drug task forces. The Ohio Criminal Justice Services grant has been the primary funding source for many of these task forces, and the reduction in grants has made it difficult for them to cover essential costs such as staffing, administrative expenses, overtime, operational expenses, equipment, vehicles, and other critical resources. Without sufficient funding, many Ohio drug task forces may cease to exist or be forced to scale back their operations, making it even harder to address the ongoing drug epidemic.

For many Ohio counties, drug task forces serve as a force multiplier, allowing law enforcement to pool resources, share information, and better investigate and disrupt drug trafficking organizations. These task forces are not only crucial in investigating drug traffickers but also in addressing violent crime and human trafficking—both of which often have strong ties to drug trafficking. Moreover, Ohio's drug task forces often play a key role in supporting individuals struggling with addiction and mental health issues by connecting them with services like TCN Behavioral Health or the Mental Health Recovery Board. Despite facing funding challenges, task forces have worked tirelessly with local social services to find creative ways to continue combating the drug epidemic.

If House Bill 194 is passed by this committee and the Senate, it will provide a stable funding source that will greatly assist Ohio's drug enforcement task forces in carrying out their vital mission. This bill will enable them to continue their efforts to fight the traffickers who distribute fentanyl, methamphetamine, Xylazine, and other dangerous narcotics that are destroying lives and communities across Ohio.

**Closing:**

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