

HB 194 Proponent Testimony

Please lead of your testimony with the below sentence-

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee my name is **Title First Last.....** and I am here today to provide proponent testimony on HB 194.

Portion of the legislation that discusses the grant program.

Fees required to be deposited in the fund under section 4503.261 of the Revised Code. Money in the fund shall be used only in accordance with this section to award grants to counties, municipal corporations, townships, township police districts, and joint police districts to defray the expenses that a drug task force organized in the county, or in the county in which the municipal corporation, township, or district is located, incurs in performing its functions related to the enforcement of the state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal drug activity. The division of criminal justice services shall administer all money deposited into the drug law enforcement fund and, by rule adopted under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, shall establish procedures for a county, municipal corporation, township, township police district, or joint police district to apply for money from the fund to defray the expenses that a drug task force organized in the county, or in the county in which the municipal corporation, township, or district is located, incurs in performing its functions related to the enforcement of the state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal drug activity, procedures and criteria for determining eligibility of applicants to be provided money from the fund, and procedures and criteria for determining the amount of money to be provided out of the fund to eligible applicants.

Main talking points-

- Importance of the grant program

HB 194 is essential to the success of the METRICH Enforcement Unit along with other drug taskforces across this state. The METRICH Enforcement Unit is the largest decentralized Task Force in the state serving 545,000 residents. The Task Force consists of 10 counties and 31 law enforcement agencies. This grant program will ensure that Task Forces across this state will have the necessary resources to achieve a three (3) pronged approach that focuses on enforcement, treatment resources, and outreach and prevention/education resources.

- Needs of drug task forces throughout the state

Most law enforcement agencies in the state do not have the luxury of large budgets. Because of this, agencies have to collaborate together to share resources and the

financial burdens associated with operating costs. For these reasons, Task Forces must rely on grant funding to cover personnel costs, equipment, confidential funds, etc. For instance, in the METRICH region which consists of 10 counties all operating under their own control boards face different drug related issues. It is vital that grant funding be available to equip our counties with the tools to target their issues and continue to support their recovery and prevention efforts.

- Why other funding options are difficult to come by

It has been reported that the current Drug Law Enforcement Grant will not sustain itself. The DLEF grant has faced reduced funding for the last three years along with the JAG grant which have been the primary funding source for Task Forces throughout the state. These two grant options have put an extreme financial burden on Task Forces. Because of the decline of funding, Task Forces have had to supplement with current grant opportunities like “Recovery Ohio” which is not a permanent source.

- Any other components you deem necessary to mention

Task Forces employ a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement approach to policing which has been proven to be successful. In a collaborative effort, we continue to leverage most of our operating costs from local agencies while combining resources, sharing information and working in partnership on issues affecting crime within the state.

In Closing:

The METRICH Enforcement Unit has been in operation for 38 years. Over those years we have steadily watched funding decrease, however, operating costs and drug trends have continued to increase at a rapid pace. This widening gap makes it nearly impossible to continue our impact within our communities on resources, recovery, and drug enforcement efforts. This is not unique to just the METRICH Enforcement Unit but rather an issue **ALL** Task Forces in Ohio are experiencing.