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# State Representative Joshua E. Williams
## Ohio House of Representatives

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and esteemed members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 57. This legislation will empower our schools to proactively combat the ongoing opioid epidemic by requiring each district to formulate policies related to the storage and usage of overdose reversal drugs, like naxalone. By increasing access and accountability to these lifesaving drugs, our schools will be more equipped to ensure student and faculty safety in the face of this deadly crisis.

This bill is a three-pronged approach to increasing safety within our schools. The school's policy regarding overdose reversal drugs, created by the superintendent of a district, must accomplish the following: comply with the requirements set forth in Section 3715.50 of the Revised Code, decide the amount of supply stored in the school, secure the safe storage of the drugs in a location that is easily accessible to employees, and outline any training necessary for employees or contractors. The monetary portion of the bill will allow the public-school board of education, chartered and nonchartered nonpublic schools, community schools, STEM schools, and college-prep boarding schools to accept donations for the purchase of overdose reversal drugs. The communicative portion of the bill will require the superintendent to report the use of the drug to the family of the student whom the drug was administered to, the schools' governing body, and the

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Department of Education and Workforce. If a superintendent decides that a persistent pattern of overdoses is occurring at the school, then every enrolled student's family must be notified.

These three approaches will assist our education system in a fight against a rapidly growing issue across the United States. The opioid epidemic has had detrimental effects on not only Ohioans, but the whole country. Adolescents in school settings are not immune to the reach of illicit drugs like heroin and fentanyl. According to a 2022 study[1] done by the CDC, the median amount of monthly overdose deaths of persons aged 10-19 increased 109% from just 2019 to 2021. Approximately 90% of these deaths involved opioids, and 84% involved illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Two thirds of these deaths were in the presence of bystanders, most of whom had no means to provide an overdose response. Though we cannot ensure all bystanders have access to life saving drugs like naloxone, this bill will empower our school officials to be able to save lives in a place where our youth deserve to be safe and protected.

These alarming stats are indicative of a larger national trend: a trend that is tearing apart communities and robbing our youth of a safe, healthy future. Our legislators, through bills like HB 57, have the chance to effect meaningful, life saving changes for some of our most vulnerable populations. Chairwoman Fowler

[1] https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7150a2.htm

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Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill and I welcome any questions you may have.