

# Ohio Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Testimony of Melissa Arnold**

*Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics*

**Ohio Senate Education Committee**

*Senate Bill 7 – Proponent Testimony*

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 7, sponsored by State Senator Terry Johnson.

This legislation would expand the education that is provided to children regarding the dangers of substance abuse. The Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and its 2,900 members feel this is a strong bill that would expand awareness of the harms related to tobacco, marijuana, opiates, alcohol, and illicit drugs.

We all can agree that substance abuse is harmful, especially to children. Unfortunately, many kids are unaware of the real dangers related to the use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana as well as prescription and illicit drugs, and there are more substances available than ever before. The use and abuse of these products can have a permanent and detrimental effect on a child's developing brain and body.

SB 7 creates a simple and effective way to increase knowledge and awareness of the dangers of substance abuse for our children. School is one of the few places where nearly all Ohio kids intersect, and this affords us an ideal opportunity to provide education. While all Ohio pediatricians routinely provide this information, we know that some children do receive regular pediatric care and therefore school provides potentially the only opportunity to impact their future decisions related to substance abuse.

I want to commend Dr. Johnson for all that he has done to address drug abuse and addiction during his time in the General Assembly. Further, I am honored to join the many proponents who have stepped forward to support this bill and other initiatives to protect our children.

In closing, I am glad to see SB 7 receiving a vote and I hope that it can be brought to the floor in the very near future. Thank you so much for your consideration and service to the state of Ohio.

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#### Ohio Chapter

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