



PAULDING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF



Mr. Chairman and House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you in opposition of SB 3.

My name is Jason Landers. I am the Sheriff of Paulding County. I serve in rural Northwest Ohio with a population near 19,000 people. I have been employed in the same office for more than 23 years, and I am completing my 8th year as the elected Sheriff.

Paulding County Common Pleas Court implemented drug court five years ago. In that time, 76 people have been accepted into the program. Forty-eight of those individuals were diagnosed with opioid dependence. Of those 76 folks, 10 are still active and 35 have successfully completed the program. That is a 59% non-recidivism/positive retention rate. Twenty-six people were removed for violating their community control for drug related violations equaling 34%. Our judicial system believes if those 35 graduates did not begin with incarceration, we would have zero graduates.

According to my Common Pleas Judge, nearly every participant in drug court has made a statement that their sobriety and rehabilitation started with incarceration. Also, today, 80% of our active drug court participants are gainfully employed. Judge Tiffany Beckman said, "reducing our ability to use jail and prison as a tool to help get and keep people sober will cause the court to lose its effectiveness in helping to rehab these people."

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, please allow me to discuss a unit dose in regards to drug consumption. What is a unit dose? The thought of an individual possessing 49 unit doses or grams of cocaine, methamphetamine or heroine is a huge



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deal. This bag contains 49 grams of sugar. Is this a unit dose? This bag contains 1/10th gram of sugar. Is this a unit dose? To legislatively adjust laws making it a Misdemeanor level offense to possess an illegal substance that could frankly cause numerous overdoses and possibly deaths seems unrealistic to me.

There is also concerns that our courts and probation departments will not be able to keep up with the potential workload dealing with first violations, immunity if you seek treatment, the next first violation, etc. Who is going to track offender's violations/treatment/subsequent violations and so on? Is there a funding mechanism in place to assist the local level with necessary resources and manpower?

Finally, I hope everyone knows, you and I cannot make someone seek treatment for their substance abuse. People cannot be rehabilitated until they maintain a clear-sober thought process and chose to be rehabilitated. A Judge can still order treatment and there is follow through in place for those who refuse it.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Jason K. Landers, Sheriff