



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

Chief Bruce Pijanowski  
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police  
Testimony in Opposition to SB 3  
Drug Sentencing Law Reform

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Bruce Pijanowski, the Chief of Police for the City of Delaware representing the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police.

OACP is committed to improving communities but we are compelled to voice our opposition to SB 3 one last time for its potential negative impact.

In 2018, the citizens of Ohio overwhelmingly rejected many of the concepts proposed in SB3. The argument against include that it was dangerous for communities because it was an unfunded mandate that would ultimately sentence addicted people back to their communities with no treatment.

SB3 as it currently stands reduces penalties, mandatory prison terms and presumptions in favor of community treatment. The value of the impact of the certainty of penalties on prosecution, investigations and treatment must be considered. One may argue that the severity of punishment is not effective, but it is a fact that it leads to plea bargaining and certainty of punishment. An added benefit is that the resulting punishment creates a compelling reason to stay in treatment.

SB 3 contains no provision to provide funding to build up the treatment services, workforce and facilities needed in most communities. OACP would suggest that this should occur before any sentencing reform. Without the availability of treatment, and a way to pay for it, there is no realistic benefit to SB 3. The ultimate result will be more addicted people returned to the community with no chance for treatment. OACP agrees that jail and prison are not the best alternative for treatment but for the reasons stated prefer that penalties and sentencing remain as they are. We are open to the expansion of diversion, drug treatment courts, treatment in lieu and expungement as viable options to sentencing reform. We are opposed to current legislation for its lack of funding and the negative result that will follow.

The intent of SB 3 is a worthy cause, and one that OACP is willing to work on in concept. Unfortunately, time and Covid had rendered work by the end of this General Assembly unrealistic. OACP is not opposed to reform, we just ask that the work continue in 2021.