

My name is Nicole Brantner I am a recovered addict. Today I am a wife and a mother but that would never have been possible if it weren't for our justice system that saved my life.

I was arrested more than 18 times for various crimes associated with my substance abuse despite the arrests I never sought treatment for my substance abuse. Not until, the day I was sentenced to a correctional rehabilitation program through the courts because of a felony conviction. I spent 6 months in that program before I was released on probation which lasted for 5 years. It was that program that saved my life in every way. If it were not for the felony convictions on my record, for those moments in jail totaling 496 days I would be dead.

In fact in 2013 while on house arrest after my conviction I was so close to relapse that I turned myself in rather than relapse again. Recovery isn't just mind over matter and when it comes to that urge that just won't go away no matter how hard you try to distract yourself and when I felt the growing desperation to use again I felt that I needed to be caged to stop myself. Under SB3 this would not have been an option.

My felony conviction held me accountable to stay clean and that accountability in many ways is what prevented me from relapsing. While my felony conviction held me accountable it did not hinder me in society. I worked very hard to regain the privileges that I now have today and I appreciate them more than I ever did before my addiction. One of those rights being my ability to legally own a firearm which I filed for in 2018.

I still have two felony convictions on my record but thanks to our court system I am here and alive to tell you this story. If these proposed reform laws were in place during my arrests they would have killed me. This law goes from punishing and giving accountability to addicts to removing accountability of addiction, accountability which we need to survive. The traffickers will adapt as they have in the past and take advantage of this law. The laws are already lax with the Good Samaritan law being so severely flawed and I believe it is behind even more deaths and freed dealers in Ohio.

I know this bill was written with good intentions but when writing policies I ask that the members of the state who write them come out with us and see the devastation of our communities and the lawlessness we have already created with bad policy. I urge you to come and sit with these families who can no longer hold their children accountable after an overdose whose efforts have failed and who feel helpless watching their children kill themselves, sit down and talk to the grieving families whose children can never be healed, come ride with the drug task force and watch them spend hours on cases that never even make it to a jury, this is before Senate Bill 3. I am afraid of what Ohio would look like for both addicts and families if Senate Bill 3 passed.

We have amazing options today in the recovery communities all over Ohio. We have drug courts, treatment centers and grass roots programs all coming together to make all the obstacles listed here obtainable. I believe if we fail senate bill 3 we can come back and write it better, with accountability in mind that will preserve these programs which will save people's lives and keep dealers in prison where they belong.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Branter