

Proponent Testimony on SB 220 – John Kennedy

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Romanchuk, Ranking Member Craig, thank you for the opportunity to share proponent testimony on SB 220. Before I begin, I want to personally call out and thank Senators Hearcel Craig and Nathan Manning for their leadership as the primary sponsors of this important legislation, as well as Senators Nickie Antonio, Cecil Thomas, and Kenny Yuko for their co-sponsorship. Thank you all.

My name is John Kennedy. I'm a 55-year-old type 1 diabetic and I have lived with diabetes for 28 years now. As a "veteran" type 1 diabetic, I know first-hand how incredibly important it is to have access to affordable, life-giving insulin. Insulin is life to a type 1 diabetic; it is our oxygen because without it, we die. It's as simple, and as tragic, as that.

And the tragedy is that the cost of a tiny vial of insulin has skyrocketed in the last decade. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), insulin prices increased a whopping 64% from 2014-2019. A study by the Health Care Cost institute found that the average yearly insulin expense for a type 1 diabetic in 2016 -- \$5,705.00 -- had essentially doubled from 2012.

The high price of insulin has forced many type 1 diabetics -- too many -- to skip or ration their doses, which leads to a whole host of poor health outcomes -- complications like renal failure that land you in the hospital, or complications like diabetic ketoacidosis that could lead to your death. That's not hyperbole. There are people in this room or online virtually today who lost a child, a sibling, a friend or loved one for one tragic reason: They could not afford the insulin -- this tiny vial of life -- that keeps them alive.

But as members of the Insurance Committee, you now have the opportunity to do something about that. By passing Senate Bill 220, you will effectively put a cap -- \$35 -- on what diabetics will pay out of pocket for their monthly prescription insulin supplies. For those with high-deductible health plans or unpredictable healthcare costs -- and there are many of us that fall into that category -- this price cap will give diabetics predictability and the assurance that this tiny vial of life remains accessible and affordable.

On behalf of all diabetics and those that love us across our great state of Ohio, I urge you to pass Senate Bill 220 to make it easier for diabetics to afford the insulin they need to simply live. This law will save lives, and I humbly ask for your support.

Sincerely,

John Kennedy
515 E. Acadia Pt
Aurora, OH 44202
Cell: (703) 216-0884