

SB 288 - Proponent Testimony

FROM: Deborah Crawford, MSW, MAPA and J. Mac Crawford, MS, PhD

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony for the Good Samaritan provisions of SB 288 and additional amendments. We appreciate your public service; we know it is not easy.

We have lived in Columbus since 1983 and both attended OSU obtaining advanced degrees (Mac - PhD in Preventive Medicine and Deborah – Masters in Social Work and MA in Public Administration). We have worked extensively in Public Health and Mac as an RN.

Good Samaritan legislation is meant to protect people from prosecution for low level drug possession when they call for help in the event of an overdose. This is intended to encourage people to call for help and save lives. Unfortunately, Ohio's legislation is very limited.

Whether we know it or not, we have all had people in our lives that use and abuse drugs and alcohol, and some that suffer from the disease of addiction and need help. These people are our mothers, fathers, children, sisters, spouses, uncles, friends, neighbors, people we work with and strangers we see on the street. Some of these people are needlessly dying because they or the people around them are afraid to call for help.

The amendments we support expand SB 288 to include protection for paraphernalia as well as the following.

1. **Remove restrictions for those on parole and probation** – Any restrictions on Good Samaritan policy will result in the loss of lives that could be saved and people released from prison and jail are at heightened risk of overdose after release.
2. **Remove limitations on how many times an individual can receive the immunity** - There should be no limits on how many times you can save a life. In hard-hit communities, some people are responding to more than two overdoses in a week, sometimes even in a day.
3. **Remove treatment assessment requirements** - Not all those who are in possession of drugs or paraphernalia are addicted; requiring treatment creates more burden on already filled treatment centers. Slots in these facilities should go to people who need treatment and are ready for it.

From the loss of life in Ohio and the nation, it is clear that our current drug policies are not working. Please, we urge you to add these amendments to save the lives of mothers, fathers, children, sisters, spouses, uncles, friends, neighbors, people we work with and strangers we see on the street. Thank you for your public service and this opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Deborah and J. Mac Crawford, crawford@columbus.rr.com