

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Minority Member Celebreeze and Distinguished members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill One, this afternoon.

This legislation would update our drug abuse laws to reflect the lethal nature of illegally produced and trafficked fentanyl, or related synthetic products, shipped to the United States from foreign countries.

I, Tugg Massa, Founder and Executive Director, of the non-profit organization 'Akron Say No to Dope, Inc.', place people in treatment. I also advocate in courtrooms in Akron / Summit County, to help addicts get treatment in lieu of jail time. The importance of Senate Bill One is to distinguish the difference between an addict or drug dealer, which could be done by percentage of weight by grain or grams. A ½ gram or under is usually a go-between and not a dealer. I know this because I was once a dealer, but have since changed and devoted myself to helping others get the help I was never offered.

The importance of enhancing charges of these substances is that it will make a statement to the individual selling these lethal drugs (like carfentanyl, fentanyl and all other synthetic substances). I believe stronger sentencing guidelines would greatly reduce the death toll in our communities across Ohio. In 2016 Ohio saw 3,050 overdose deaths and 2017 is going to surpass this number, if Senate Bill One isn't passed. Although the bill won't fix everything, it will reduce trafficking and possible future use of lethal drugs.

Thank you, again.