**In April 1865, following the end of the Civil War, nearly 1/3 of all currency in the U.S. was Counterfeit. This issue plagued President Lincoln and Secretary of the Treasury because it devalued the U.S. Dollar and limited efforts to rebuild the U.S. The Secretary of the Treasury devised a plan to create an organization within the Treasury Department devoted to suppressing counterfeiters and securing the American economy. That agency was the U.S. Secret Service. 152 years later, we are still tasked with suppressing counterfeiters and securing the American economy.**

**Over the past year, the United States Secret Service, working closely with local police agencies and prosecutors, has identified a disturbing trend during their investigations and subsequent arrests of suspects in Ohio using counterfeit currency and other counterfeit obligations. Roughly 85% of the counterfeit currency investigations conducted by the Dayton Secret Service office can be tied to the abuse and purchase of illicit narcotics. Since 2016, we have also noticed a disparity in charging these offenders in each district in Ohio, sometimes dependent on the agency arresting the suspects or the prosecutor’s office bringing forth charges. The Secret Service has been working daily to correct these issues and to have the closest “correct” charge be communicated to all agencies. From our experience and in researching the legislative history tied to the O.R.C., we identified the need for a new and comprehensive counterfeiting law that would correctly address this growing problem, while helping police agencies and the public they serve.**

**The gap in the O.R.C. has occurred for two reasons. The first is Technology. The law, which is adaptive, has not kept pace with increased technology as it relates to counterfeit currency and the ease at which it is produced. In the early 90s it was easy for the Secret Service to pursue Federal prosecution for every case of counterfeiting because it typically required sophisticated equipment and actual skill. Today, you can spend $50.00 on a printer at Walmart and generate several thousand dollars in good quality counterfeit that passes easily. This counterfeit also makes its way to narcotics cases and other criminal activity locally. Now, because of the ease at which counterfeit is manufactured, taking all counterfeit cases Federally is not an option. Since October 2016, over $93 million dollars in counterfeit currency has been introduced into circulation nationwide. Most cases involving counterfeit possession and use are left to local municipalities to prosecute. This, in turn, requires a law that allows the state to prosecute correctly and justly.**

**The second reason for this requested change to the O.R.C. is simply the confusion surrounding the Title/Definition of the criminal conduct as it exists now. The officers/deputies we work with in these cases want to do the right thing and charge correctly, but are confused in the language of the O.R.C. on this issue. Everyone knows what Counterfeiting is. Few (Officers/Deputies and Arrestees) understand that Forgery is a similar crime, fewer understand that Forgery is the closest chargeable crime in the O.R.C., and even fewer still realize that Forgery does not adequately fit the criminality of counterfeiting.**

**With the support and leadership of Ohio State Representative Rick Perales (Greene County), this bill has been drafted to correct these issues with a much needed addition to the law of Ohio. Ohio is one of only ten states that lacks legislation addressing the crime of falsely making, forging, counterfeiting, or altering written instruments such as currency, coins, bonds or checks, and/or other securities of the United States. This new law will set a National Standard for counterfeit violations at the State level while significantly helping agencies address the use of this counterfeit to purchase narcotics in our communities. The language of the bill was written with the future in mind. With emerging banking technologies – such as the chip and pin – comes the criminal development of new counterfeit access devices. This proposed legislation will not only account for current technologies, but also future innovations in payment systems and currency.**

**As a proud Ohioan, Veteran of Desert Storm, and Law enforcement Officer with 31 years of experience, it is my great honor to sponsor this bill because it makes Ohio better. In the end, that’s really why we’re all here.**