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JUSTIN D. WHITE
DEPUTY CHIEF

November 20, 2018

Dear Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

Within a three day period this November, Wood County Deputies and Bowling Green Police Officers responded to unresponsive males who could not be revived. Both times these responses were for subjects who had succumbed to addiction. Each had a family, a future and desire to quit. They did not make it. Despite being in treatment at the same center these two men could not overcome the physical and mental strain of fighting the addiction. Though the investigation into the death of each man continues, the general circumstances are familiar to all of us. There have been others in treatment that could not be saved. The substances are far too easy to acquire, can be found locally and as some in treatment have indicated, can be purchased right next door to where the recovery centers are located. The dealers know where the "customers" can be found. It's good business for them to tempt those trying to quit. Therefore, Ohio needs to do more to make trafficking in these deadly substances risky and costly for the dealers.

HB 296 will enhance the penalties if a drug trafficking offense is committed near an addiction services provider. This bill is a much needed addition to the tools that law enforcement uses to fight this addiction epidemic. The Bowling Green Police Division began carrying Naloxone to reverse opiate overdoses in 2016. Since then Officers have saved 10 individuals that would have otherwise perished from their addiction. Ohio has provided the person struggling with addiction the opportunity to receive treatment through the good Samaritan law, (HB 110) giving them 30 days to seek treatment after an overdose and immunity from prosecution. Wood County has worked very hard to provide outreach through Prosecutor Paul Dobson's ARC (Addiction Response Collaborative). ARC personnel follow up on overdoses and provide the means for those suffering from addiction to get the help they need.

There are many programs and treatment providers available to Wood County residents who are suffering from addiction and we have had success stories to show that small victories are taking place. However, the availability of dangerous drugs continues to set all of those efforts back. Laws like HB 296 give Ohio law enforcement and prosecutors the means to make supplying dangerous drugs near the most vulnerable a greater risk to the freedom and the profits of drug traffickers. I believe much more needs to be done to punish and remove drug traffickers from our communities. HB 296 and similar initiatives provide tough law and order solutions while remaining in line with Ohio's values of mercy for the addicted and strong justice for the trafficker. Please join me in supporting HB 296.

Thank you,

Noah A. Hetrick
Chief of Police

