October 29, 2019

**Proponent of HB 10**

Good afternoon, Chairman Shuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking member O’brien and members of Government and Agency Review. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 10.

My name is Angela Davis. Our family moved to Columbus a year ago from New Jersey. As a social worker, I have over 25 years of experience working with populations battling addictions in various settings including county jails in New Jersey and a correctional facility contracted with Federal Bureau of Prisons in Philadelphia. I’ve also authored two books, one of which touches on the drug epidemic. I am a proponent of HB 10.

First, I’d like to point out the vulnerability of this population. We are all well aware of the negative, and sometimes criminal, behavior that those with addiction engage in. What is less known, however, is the many ways this population is exploited by others. Besides those in the sex trade and neighborhood criminals, those with respectability also act as manipulators for their own gain. There is a common practice political practice in New Jersey that is known as paying “street money.” This is where political operatives use funds to pay residents in poor communities and those with addictions to go to the polls on election day. Unfortunately, there are several indications that street money is being paid out extensively in the Columbus area.

Formulating policy that will prevent and reduce drug misuse, addiction and overdose death is absolutely essential for continuity of care as many in this population are transient. As they go from community to community there are lapses in treatment and medication monitoring. We need coordination at the state level as several agencies at the local level has been lax in actually providing services for which they are mandated. This will ensure that these agencies are held accountable for implementing treatment services and programs.

I would hope that officials receive the funding and resources they need for drug prevention and treatment. This will ultimately save businesses and taxpayers money because it is very costly for the community as a whole when someone is active in their addiction. There is lost productivity at work. Increases in medical and insurance benefits as sicknesses among this population increases. There is also an upswing in the cost of entitlement benefits as those coping with addiction have to rely on government assistance.

In closing, I’d like to say HB 10 is very much needed if we have any hopes in fighting this drug epidemic. I’d be happy to take any questions. If not, thank you for your time.