**Testimony of Pastor Uhleric Reynolds**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

* Senator Bill Coley, Chairman
* Matt Huffman, Vice Chair
* Senator Hearcel Craig, Ranking Member

My name is Uhleric Reynolds. I am the Senior Pastor and Founder of Common Ground Destiny Center here in Columbus, OH where I have been involved in Christian Ministry for over 25 years. Common Ground Destiny Center Church is a faith-based non-denominational church that empowers, equips and encourages people to find their destiny.

I also serve as the Chaplain of Religious Services for Nothing Into Something Real Estate, Inc.- a faith-based non-profit housing organization that assists homeless restoring citizens, including those with co-occurring disorders of addiction and mental illness.

Thank you for this time that you have allowed for me to speak and give testimony on behalf of Governor DeWine’s StrongOhio plan.

As a pastor, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that guns, drugs, alcohol and mental illness has on our community and within my own congregation.

In my occupation, I work with people in recovery and have the challenge of working with individuals who are impacted by mental health and addiction day in and day out. Over the last few decades clergy have become more sensitive and yet vulnerable to these issues but have left without a real strategy to address them until now.

This is why I fully support Governor DeWine’s STRONG Ohio plan. It is a proposal that provides additional safety measures and helps to address these issues in a practical way that makes sense in creating a safer Ohio.

The Governor’s proposal outlines Greater Penalties for Gun Crimes which may serve as a deterrent for those who are already barred from owning a gun and for those who are in recovery and should not possess one.

The Governor’s StrongOhio plan also:

1. Gives leverage to hospitals and courts to request the probate court for court ordered treatment. (much needed Safety Protection Orders that work)
2. Reduces loop holes through background checks, even for private purchases and gun shows.
3. Provides fairness which involves rigorous “due process” designed to protect the accused,
4. Provides confidentiality for persons/family who fear repercussions for reporting those who own firearms that possibly pose a risk to their family and or the community.
5. Offers on-going help to those in crisis, in order to help bring greater healing for those who need help.
6. Enforces new state background checks that will protect private sellers from the actions of those who they want to sell to.

Governor DeWine along with the House and Senate provided $675 million in wraparound services for schools to design individualized programs, in conjunction with local mental health providers or social service organizations, to address the social and emotional challenges that Ohio students confront.

The Ohio Department of Medicaid is investing $15 million in telehealth mental health services for students giving our youth access to high-quality mental health care no matter where they live.

With that said, I support Governor DeWine’s proposals and applaud the Governor and his Administration for acting rapidly by creating a all-inclusive plan.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity and thank you to every member of this committee for your willingness to serve Ohioans.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me anytime.

Uhleric Reynolds, Ph.D

Senior Pastor/Founder

Common Ground Destiny Center Church