



HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE – Interested Party Testimony, SB 25,
March 30th, 2022

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit written testimony as an interested party for Senate Bill 25.

My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Ohio Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity (AFP). As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the country, AFP is driving long-term solutions to some of the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its thousands of activists across Ohio, are dedicated to breaking barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing or reducing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and by transforming their communities.

AFP [strongly opposed](#) this legislation in the Senate earlier this General Assembly. However, per an agreement with Senator Gavarone, who did graciously work with stakeholders and Chairman Manning to make key changes to the 'as introduced' version of the bill, AFP would ask you Chairman LaRe, and member of the committee, to note that my organization's official stance on the bill is now as an interested party.

The two major changes made to SB 25 from AFP's perspective are 1.) the reduction of the radius of the enhanced penalty zones from 1,000 to 500 feet, and 2.) the mens rea change from "recklessly" to "knows or should know". Though my organization would still ardently dispute the need for this piece of legislation at all, we acknowledge these changes made in good faith are improvements, and we are mostly willing to leave it at that. The link to previous testimony in the preceding paragraph contains more information about AFP's position on criminal sentencing related to drug offenses.

The intent behind SB 25 is laudable. The legislature has correctly recognized for years that drug addiction and trafficking truly are epidemics devastating families and communities around Ohio and ruining lives by holding people back from living up to their full potential. Session after session, more and more bills enhancing criminal penalties and creating new offenses are contemplated and enacted, yet the problem persists. Everyone, including AFP wants to see this problem addressed. There was a terrific, evidence-based piece of legislation, Senate Bill 3 of the 133rd General Assembly, that would have been a major step forward in combatting this problem. The previous iteration of this committee acted on that bill, but this chamber ultimately did not. The changes made to the ‘as introduced’ version of SB 25 make the bill better, but if enacted, it still won’t make a dent in the underlying problem. It will just arbitrarily send a few more people to prison every year.

Thank you again, Chairman LaRe, for the opportunity to submit testimony as an interested party to SB 25.

Jeff Dillon
Americans for Prosperity
Ohio Legislative Director

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.AmericansForProsperity.org.