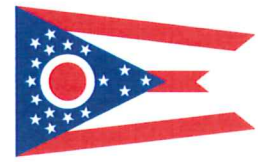




## FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

222 East Town Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4611  
(614) 224-5700 Fax (614) 224-5775  
www.fopohio.org



### House Homeland Security Committee

October 11, 2023

### Testimony On HB 230

Good morning, Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and all House Homeland Security Committee members.

My name is Jay McDonald, and I am here today to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 230 on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio. I am a 30-year Ohio law enforcement officer, and I have been the Chief of Police of the Marion Police Department for the last three years. Before that, I supervised the Major Crimes unit, including the county-wide drug task force in Marion County. So, I have seen the devastation fentanyl has caused in my community and others like it. I also went to our southern border in March of this year to see first-hand how the issues impact communities like mine here in Ohio.

The FOP of Ohio strongly supports increasing the penalties for those who traffic drugs in our communities. The reason is that so many people die and almost die from poison brought to each county in Ohio. No county is immune, but let me tell you about my county. Marion County has about 65,000 people who live there. They also have, on average, about 40 people who die of drug overdoses yearly. In 2022, 2,196.40 grams of fentanyl was seized in Marion County. **That is enough to kill 1,098,000, according to the DEA and CDC.** In June of this year, Marion law enforcement and the FBI concluded a large-scale drug trafficking investigation that netted the arrests of 31 traffickers from Marion and one with direct connections to the Mexican Drug Cartel. In this investigation, over three kilograms of fentanyl, 2 kilograms of cocaine, and 1 kilogram of methamphetamine were seized. Marion County is one of Ohio's leading fatal overdose counties on a per-capita basis.

Fentanyl is increasingly being found in other drugs. From methamphetamine to marijuana, fentanyl is being seen more and more often. I believe that is one of the leading causes of fatal drug overdoses: people getting fentanyl in ways they did not expect and their bodies having no built-up tolerance for the deadly drug that is fentanyl.

I have spoken to grandmothers begging me to arrest their grandchildren so at least they know they will not die from an overdose.

The FOP of Ohio strongly supports the provisions of this bill involving drug trafficking and fatal overdoses as part of a comprehensive strategy that includes prevention, drug treatment, and enforcement to combat the drug crisis in our state.

When I went to the United States / Mexico border in Arizona, I saw how the issue of illegal border crossing is more significant than I realized. The other aspects of this bill directly relate to what I learned during my trip to the border. I learned that the Mexican Drug Cartels are trafficking people and that illegal trade is becoming more profitable than drug trafficking. I learned how the cartels control border crossings, how border crossers

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Chairman Haraz Ghanbari

November 11, 2023

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become indentured servants to the cartels, and how the cartels facilitate illegal border crossings. The FOP of Ohio supports the human trafficking aspects of this bill as well.

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I will gladly attempt to answer your questions.