

## Families Against Fentanyl – Ohio House Bill 230 Testimony

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the House Homeland Security Committee: My name is James Rauh, and I want to first express my gratitude for the invitation to deliver testimony in support of House Bill 230 on behalf of Families Against Fentanyl.

Families Against Fentanyl was born in the wake of my son Tommy's tragic passing in 2015. Like too many others, Tommy was the victim of poisoning by illicit fentanyl. As a chemist by trade, I have a deep understanding of fentanyl, its potency, and the dangers of its ever-growing prevalence. I founded Families Against Fentanyl in memory of my son, with the goal of compelling the federal government to see illicit fentanyl for what it is: a Weapon of Mass Destruction.

In recent years, FAF has become a go-to for experts and the media regarding trends in the fentanyl crisis. It was Families Against Fentanyl analysis that revealed the bombshell statistic that illicit fentanyl is the Number One cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45 — data that was independently verified by Snopes and the Washington Post. Additional analysis conducted by FAF has shown infants to be the fastest-growing casualties of illicit fentanyl. Our work is consistently cited by major news outlets across the country.

I want to commend Representatives Abrams and Swearingen for introducing House Bill 230, legislation that addresses the dual crises of human trafficking and drug trafficking. A 2021 report by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) stated that “trafficking of illegal drugs and human trafficking often happen together...It doesn't matter which product is being sold — both drugs and sex are lucrative industries — as long as money is made.”<sup>1</sup>

Rosa Beltré, president and CEO of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, deemed the state of Ohio to be a “hub” for human trafficking due to our extensive network of highways and proximity to the northern border.<sup>2</sup>

An equally dark statistic was found in Families Against Fentanyl analysis released in September that showed Ohio to be among the top four states with “the highest number of fentanyl and other synthetic opioid deaths in the 12-month period ending in April 2023.”<sup>3</sup>

House Bill 230 confronts these issues with the grave seriousness required to curtail them. It targets the traffickers while showing compassion to their victims. Families Against Fentanyl supports House Bill 230 and encourages its swift passage.

Thank you.

James Rauh  
Founder, Families Against Fentanyl  
familiesagainstfentanyl.org

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dea.gov/stories/2021/2021-01/2021-01-28/violent-drug-organizations-use-human-trafficking-expand-profits>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.citybeat.com/news/in-our-backyard-ohio-is-one-of-the-worst-states-in-the-nation-for-human-trafficking-12483694>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.familiesagainstfentanyl.org/research/faf-issue-brief-september-2023>