

## **HB 230**

### **Opponent Testimony**

**Emma Bohney**

**10/23/2023**

Dear Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer opponent testimony for House Bill 230.

My name is Emma Bohney. I am a citizen of the state of Ohio and a student at Oberlin College. I am opposed to the passing of House Bill 230 because I want the state that I live in to be a safer place for all people to live. I want to live in a state that takes care of its people, that allows them to live happy and healthy lives, and that supports them through their struggles. I want to reduce the number of fentanyl- and other drug-related deaths in the state of Ohio. House Bill 230 will not achieve these aims.

Increased prosecution and criminal penalties for drug-induced homicide do not reduce the risk of death by overdose, but actually increase the risk of drug-related deaths. [The National Institute of Justice](#) cites research showing that increased criminal penalties do little to deter crime in general. In addition, evidence from a number of states who have undertaken increased prosecution and criminal penalties for drug-induced homicide reveals that such measures only increase the numbers of overdose deaths. Drug overdoses in the states of Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Tennessee increased between 7.6% and 20.1% in one year, alongside increases in drug-induced homicide prosecutions, according to [Fair and Just Prosecution](#). Implementing similar policies in Ohio will only lead to more deaths from drug overdoses.

Rather than implementing a mandatory five-year sentence for drug dealers found responsible for fentanyl-related overdose deaths, and increasing criminal penalties for other drug trafficking charges, the state of Ohio should use its resources to invest in community programs to treat addiction, reduce poverty, and support families impacted by drug abuse. By giving people better access to healthcare solutions to treat addiction, the state can reduce drug abuse and overdose-related deaths. By reducing poverty, the state can remove stressors that drive people to use dangerous drugs and reduce pressures that drive people to sell drugs. By supporting families impacted by drug abuse, the state can strengthen family-based support systems and reduce the effects of drug abuse on communities. All of these measures will do more to prevent overdose-related deaths than increased penalties on drug traffickers.

Overall, I oppose the passing of House Bill 230 because research indicates that its measures to increase penalties for drug-induced homicides will only increase overdose deaths, and the state's resources would be much more effective at reducing overdose deaths if invested in programs

focused on supporting recovering addicts, their families, and communities. Thank you for hearing my testimony. I hope that you will choose not to move forward with legislation for House Bill 230.

Sincerely,

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