



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Ohio Chamber of Commerce

Opponent – House Bill 92

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Chairman Mathews, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express the Ohio Chamber of Commerce's opposition of House Bill 92, which would create a Canadian Drug Importation Program.

As you may know, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate, and we represent over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

While we applaud the sponsors goal to lower prescription drug costs for Ohioans, we believe that this legislation has significant risks and uncertainties that could ultimately harm both the business community and the public.

Florida embarked on a similar initiative, seeking to import prescription drugs from Canada to reduce costs for its residents. However, despite Florida's efforts, the program has yet to yield any tangible results. Florida has spent upwards of \$50 million to a vendor for a contract signed in 2020. Yet even with recent FDA authorization, Florida must take additional steps before the FDA will allow any drugs to be imported. Meaning, states could spend tens of millions of dollars to implement a program, and even if regulatory requirements are met, there is no guarantee of eventual approval or success.

In addition to the financial and federal regulatory burdens that Ohio could face, this legislation raises other concerns, specifically regarding supply chain security and the impact that counterfeit drugs have on business.

Ensuring the safety and efficacy of imported drugs should be a top priority. The current supply chain for prescription drugs in the United States is tightly regulated to protect consumers. Introducing drugs from outside this system poses potential risks related to drug quality, authenticity, and safety. The logistical challenges of verifying and maintaining these standards for imported drugs are substantial and could damage consumer confidence.

In efforts to be proactive in addressing this concern, the Ohio Chamber organized a roundtable last October with community and statewide leaders, including Attorney General Dave Yost, Franklin County Sheriff Dallas Baldwin, the office of the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney, Congressman Troy Balderson's Chief of Staff, State Representative Cindy Abrams, State Representative Andrea White, among others. This was the first of many discussions the Chamber plans to hold around this topic, and we encourage any other state legislators who have interest to be involved.

The discussion focused on the detrimental effect of counterfeit drugs and how the state can combat this, while maintaining a safe and effective drug supply chain. The use of counterfeit pills more than doubled in recent years, with counterfeit pills being the 6th most frequently seized counterfeit item. Most online pharmacies, that some physicians utilize, operate out of compliance with U.S. laws and standards. And to the average eye, it is nearly impossible to differentiate between authenticity or counterfeit.

Local providers, pharmacies, and pharmaceutical distributors could be adversely affected by the introduction of a Canadian Drug Importation Program. The shift in drug sourcing may disrupt existing supply chains and economic relationships, potentially leading to negative economic impacts in Ohio. This may lead to an increased use of counterfeit drugs, and if so, consumers risk experiencing unanticipated side effects and serious health and safety concerns due to the potential presence of harmful ingredients or incorrect dosages.

Given these concerns, we urge the committee to carefully consider these factors and explore more effective approaches to lowering prescription drug costs for Ohioans. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide opposition to HB 92. I am happy to answer any questions.