

Jonathan Burkey
Opponent Testimony HB 451
House Ways and Means Committee
June 4th, 2024

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide opponent testimony. My name is Jonathan Burkey and I am a pastor from The Church of the Nazarene in Lima, Ohio, and the executive director of Compassionate Ministries of Lima, a 501c3 that provides hot meals and pastoral care in our community.

I am concerned with the proposed legislation in House Bill 451, as I am convinced that it would make life more difficult for citizens of the United States like myself that want to do philanthropic work in countries designated in the bill as “drug markets.”

Let me provide an example. I minister amongst immigrants in Lima, Ohio, a rural town in Northwest Ohio. One of my friends from Honduras has a brother living in that country that just three weeks ago acquired a very serious infection in his leg that looked as if it was headed toward amputation. Without the right medical care, his situation could have continued to worsen. As a community, we raised the \$500 necessary to get him the care he required and he was treated. I am glad to let you know that he is recovering and will not lose his leg. My story is not one of drugs or any sort of illegal activity with illegal immigrants. It is a story of brotherly kindness and friendship. If **the remittance fee created by HB 451** was imposed on top of the additional fees for this surgery, our state which I argue is a state of brotherly kindness and friendship, would have imposed an unnecessary burden on this child of God.

If you allow HB 451 to pass, my concern is that the most vulnerable and needy would be the ones penalized. I also am not convinced that this method of fundraising is the most effective and consistent option for our state.

There are many other ways that we could raise money for law enforcement. **For example, by allowing** those waiting to attain permanent residency to purchase drivers licenses and registration. I would love to be a part of conversations brainstorming additional ways to increase revenues for our state, but I am convinced that this legislation is not the proper channel.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer your questions.