

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/house-bill-205-proponent-testimony>

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Below is our Chief Lobbyist Gary Daniels' proponent testimony on House Bill 205. This was delivered to the House Criminal Justice Committee on June 20, 2019.

To Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 205.

As this committee previously heard during sponsor testimony, HB 205 is an update to Ohio's existing Good Samaritan law. Current law applies to minor drug possession offenses. HB 205 expands it to include drug paraphernalia. This is important because it seems rather nonsensical to provide limited immunity for possession of the actual drugs but not to the tools used to ingest them.

What we also know is that, when asked, people in these situations say that the number one reason they do not call emergency services when they or someone they are with are experiencing an overdose is fear of law enforcement. So, in a very real way, Good Samaritan laws save lives.

Because these laws save lives, the ACLU of Ohio believes we should strive for the best possible Good Samaritan law while the interest and opportunity exists.

Accordingly, the ACLU of Ohio suggests the following changes to current law and HB 205:

I believe we all share the goal of saving lives, especially for people in such vulnerable situations. The better a state's Good Samaritan law, the more lives saved. House Bill 205 is an improvement and deserves your favorable consideration. But, Ohio also can and should do much better. There is plenty of room for further improvement. The ACLU of Ohio asks that you pass HB 205 while also ensuring our Good Samaritan law is the best it can be.

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