



## OCPOA STANCE ON ISSUE ONE

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The intent of The Neighborhood Safety, Drug Treatment, and Rehabilitation initiative, also known as Issue One, appears at face value, to be an amendment that supports treatment over incarceration for individuals with substance use disorder (SUD). I think we all agree that we have a health epidemic on our hands and treatment is more appropriate than incarceration for individuals who suffer from SUD. However, Issue One, as presented, is not the answer to Ohio's drug problem or Ohio's prison overcrowding issue, because it falls short in many respects, which is why OCPOA cannot support it.

By failing to provide adequate funding to courts we would be expected to deal with the influx of people mandated to probation repeatedly, with limited resources, and in lieu of incarceration. Furthermore, the measure incorrectly assumes that there is an infrastructure in place to handle the onslaught of people that would enter the court system.

By reducing sentences drastically for purchase, possession or use of illicit drugs, including heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl we are in essence, practically decriminalizing drug use while still requiring the court's involvement. This approach not only minimizes a judge's ability to sanction after repeated offenses and violations, but it seriously hinders a probation officer's effectiveness in compelling treatment for individuals who may be lacking the motivation to seek help for themselves. Likewise, this initiative lacks financial commitment for treatment and does a poor job describing clear-cut treatment options.

I am grateful to Issue One proponents for forcing a statewide conversation. As a result, I believe Ohio will continue making necessary legislative changes that will impact prison reduction, while simultaneously balancing the quality of treatment and court programs, and do so with greater stakeholder buy-in.

Respectfully,

*Veronica M. Perry*

President OCPOA



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