

Thursday March 21, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven Sr.
House Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

TESTIMONY REJECTING THE PASSAGE OF HOUSE BILL:

House Bill No. 7315

AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS ~ UNIFORM CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT

Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Below is directly quoted from page 8 of this proposed legislature.

“EXPLANATION BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF A N A C T RELATING TO FOOD AND DRUGS -- UNIFORM CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT *** 1 This act would make the possession of **small amounts** of schedule I through V controlled 2 substances, except for the possession of marijuana, civil violations punishable by a one hundred 3 dollar (\$100) fine for a first offense and up to three hundred dollars (\$300) for subsequent offenses. 4 Repeat offenders would also have to complete drug counseling and community service. 5 This act would take effect upon passage.”

I believe this verbiage to be too vague. It is my opinion that “small amounts” of any of these narcotics, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, Xanax, Percocet, etc. puts those who use them, and those who choose not to, at risk of severe irreparable harm. While I commend the efforts made to ensure people with addiction receive the help they need, I think decriminalizing these deadly drugs, and taking away law enforcements probable cause, is detrimental to a safe and peaceful society.

Furthermore, while I am pleased that House Bill No. 7973 has been withdrawn, House Bill No. 7896 introduced March 4, 2022 has not. It seems these bills are too broad on the spectrum leaving too much in question. One is decriminalizing one ounce or less, a large amount to decriminalize, another is 28 grams (still too large an amount 0.35 grams under one ounce) or less, another says “small amounts.”

To put these amounts into perspective: 1 ounce is equivalent to 28.35 grams. An “8 ball” of cocaine (typically purchased for more than one individual to consume) is 3.5 grams. An addict would be able to have eight, “8 balls” of cocaine and this would be a civil violation?

This does not sit well with me. While I respect the gray area, the law requires black and white to eliminate confusion, and to protect the people who reside here. Our society, and our children, need more protective measures, not less.

Kind Regards,

Pyara Meyer
Rhode Island Resident
East Providence Prevention Volunteer