

OHIO COMMON PLEAS JUDGES' ASSOCIATION

Judge Linda J. Jennings, President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of the Ohio Common Pleas Judges' Association regarding Ohio Issue One

The Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association strongly opposes Ohio Issue One, The Neighborhood Safety, Drug Treatment, and Rehabilitation amendment to the Ohio Constitution. Ohio's judges prefer to rehabilitate rather than incarcerate, but will be left powerless to do either in most cases by the passage of Issue One.

Issue One masquerades as a more thoughtful approach regarding the sentencing of drug offenders. In reality, The Neighborhood Safety Act will make neighborhoods less safe as the ultimate ability to punish those who steal, cheat, and lie in order to obtain and use dangerous drugs will be eviscerated.

Issue One fails to provide adequate funding for its stated goal of rehabilitation. It also mistakenly assumes that an adequate infrastructure already exists, ready to handle the complex needs of repeat, dependent offenders. This proposed constitutional amendment does not provide adequate funding for treatment infrastructure nor treatment itself.

The beneficiaries of Issue One's passage will be those who break the law. Issue One's passage will eliminate the court's ability to secure restitution for crime victims. Criminals will know that violating a court probation order to pay restitution will have no consequence. Why pay restitution when one can't go to prison? Why complete drug treatment, if one can't go to prison? Ohio's law abiding citizens will be further victimized. Loved ones of drug dependent individuals will lose their last chance to help their addict get clean in the criminal justice system.

Ohio's judges have been on the front line of the opioid epidemic in the nation's continual battle against drug dependency.

Few defendants upon arrest are dedicated to getting clean. Usually it is the threat of prison that helps to modify a dependent defendant's thinking. Issue One removes the threat of incarceration from our judges' sobriety toolkits.

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