

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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JASON PROBST
102ND DISTRICT

Dear Chairman Warren, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB2487, commonly known as the Good Samaritan Act. This is a vital and long overdue change in policy that will save Kansas lives.

At its core, HB2487 gives bystanders the peace of mind to reach out for medical assistance in the case of an overdose without fear of prosecution. Current law provides no such immunity from prosecution and those who have lived experience with substance misuse, those who work in the recovery community, and law enforcement, know there have been instances in which needed help wasn't summoned, due to fear of prosecution.

Overdose deaths have climbed exponentially in the United States and Kansas, despite decades of effort to curb the trafficking and use of illicit substances through criminal code. Our understanding of addiction has improved and grown over the years, as has our insight into why people don't seek help. One reason is a overwhelming fear of prosecution as a result of simply asking for medical help.

I was happy the Kansas Legislature last year decriminalized fentanyl testing strips. It was a big step that took a lot of bipartisan effort – but I'm certain it has already saved lives and spared families the pain and tragedy of loss.

My hope is that Kansas will again move toward a more compassionate and humane stance on substance misuse by passing HB2487. We owe it to Kansans to remove barriers to assistance, particularly as people are unknowingly being poisoned with drugs like fentanyl and xylazine.

Kansas remains one of only two states that have yet to provide such protection in statute. This effort to save lives has been tested and proven in 48 other states. There is demonstrably more risk in doing nothing than any risk posed by amending state statute to provide this immunity and protection. With HB2487 lives will be saved; without more lives will prematurely and needlessly die at the hands of our national opioid crisis.

Thank you for the chance to offer testimony in support of HB2487.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jason Probst

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