

To the House Judiciary Committee,

My Name is Detective Frank B. Pitzer. I have been a Narcotic's Agent with the Armstrong County District Attorney's Office for 8 years and a Full Time Deputy Sheriff with the Armstrong County Sheriff's Dept. under the direction of Sheriff Larry Crawford for 6 years. I am the Area Coordinator for ArmNET and have held the position for 7 years. I have been trained in narcotic identification, surveillance and narcotic's investigations. I have been involved in numerous narcotic investigations in Armstrong County, Clairion County, Allegheny County, Butler County, Westmoreland County and Indiana County. I have coordinated narcotics investigations with the Office of the Attorney General (BNI agency) and the PA. State Police Vice in various narcotics investigations including searches, seizures and controlled purchases of controlled substances.

.I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak at the Public Hearing in reference to House Bill # 1289. It means a lot to all of our law enforcement officials and guests that are here today to support our community. Today we are all here together in one common goal, "TO HELP STOP DRUG ABUSE NOT ONLY IN ARMSTRONG COUNTY BUT IN EVERY COMMUNITY IN PENNSYLVANIA". Drug overdose has become an everyday occurrence in our county. However, as common an occurrence it is, it is still shocking and disturbing to us all. What we do not need is this to become acceptable to any of us. We cannot let that happen. We need to fight this disease together. The involvement of our youth in Narcotic Investigations is increasing at an alarming rate. Each and every week we are interacting with our youth in traffic stops involving either a parent, guardian or an older friend. On several occasions the youths were directed by the adult to conceal a Weapon or Narcotics on their person or within the vehicle and personal items of the youth. This not only jeopardizes the Law Enforcement Officer's safety it jeopardizes the safety and welfare of the youth involved. We need to send a strong message to the Drug Dealers and Drug users that if they want to involve innocent children in their quest to distribute and use their poison in our area they are going to pay with their freedom. Several weeks ago myself along with ARMNET Agents were involved in a search of a residence in the Ford City area. Agents discovered an infant child in a bedroom area of a two story residence sleeping. Approx. 3 feet from the sleeping infant I located several syringes containing HEROIN and various paraphernalia used to ingest HEROIN. These type of incidents are increasing due to young parent drug abuse. We need some type of deterrent to put into the minds of these parents, guardians and older siblings.

In addition to the direct involvement of our youth and drug abuse, we are seeing an increase of Welfare theft with the use of the ACCESS cards used to purchase groceries by the drug dealers. The ACCESS card holders are providing these cards to the drug dealers in exchange for HEROIN, CRACK COCAINE, MARIJUANA and various prescription medications. On June 8, 2011, I was involved in an arrest of a male in Manor Twp, Armstrong County. When myself and ArmNET Agents entered the residence of the Drug Dealer to make the arrest I observed Twelve (12) groceries bags containing various types of food and house hold goods. Within each bag contained an ACCESS card of a different person. There were eight (8) different ACCESS cards used to purchase these items. Four of the ACCESS card owners were incarcerated in the Armstrong County Jail on various charges of the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act. When I conducted an interview with the suspected, and once convicted Drug Dealer, I was advised that the cards were given to the Drug Dealer to use while the ACCESS card holders were incarcerated. The Drug Dealer further stated to me that he would then compensate the ACCESS card holders with the drug of their choice when they were released from Jail. Each and every ACCESS card holder has children under the age of 13 years old. This, without a doubt, directly affects the health and well being of these children and needs to be addressed and included into House Bill # 1289.

We the law Enforcement community, and the residents of Pennsylvania need the help of the House of Representatives to help investigate, and if all goes well incarcerate, the persons directly responsible for the corruption of our youth. We cannot wait another day to address the ever growing Drug problem in our communities. This has far past an Epidemic and has become a Pandemic. We are willing to do the best job we can do, however, we need the best possible tools for the job and we need your help. Thank you for the time and effort the Judiciary Committee has put forth thus far.

Respectfully Yours,

Det. Frank B. Pitzer