

Good morning and I would like to thank the board and the elected officials present for their time regarding this important topic. My name is Wes Kahley and I have been a police officer with the City of York for 28 years. I currently serve as the departments Chief of Police. As you will be listening to testimony from expert sources all day I will be brief as I would rather attempt to answer questions that may be weighing on your mind. The heroin story in York is no different than that of other locations throughout the State and this Nation. Heroin has become the drug of choice in our area with many drug selling organizations that were devoted to the delivery of crack cocaine switching to heroin within the last year. While heroin has always been available in York we have never seen the supply levels as high as they currently are. Heroin historically sold for \$20.00 a bag and now averages \$5-\$10.00 a bag like many major metropolitan areas around the country. We have even seen heroin available for as low as \$3.00 a bag most recently. With an ever increasing supply of both the product and consumers one does not need an economic degree to understand why narcotic dealers have switched.

I am sure you hear a never ending request for funding to deal with this issue and we are no different. Like many third class cities across the State, York suffers from a dwindling tax base and an increasing number of tax exempt properties. Combine these issues with the general poverty and crime of urban areas and our cities fight an uphill battle no matter how valiant our efforts. I would suggest we need tax reform in order to save our struggling cities and allow them a fighting chance to provide services to their communities. Tax reform would eliminate the need for handouts to these municipalities and allow them the ability to stand on their own.

I am a police chief who believes in a holistic approach for many of our community's issues. The heroin problem is no different. We must supply aid to our citizens in the form of intervention and prevention while law enforcement deals with those drug dealers wishing to victimize our communities. An important tool has been taken from us which allows law enforcement to hold up their end of the bargain. Mandatory minimum sentences at one time allowed us to target violent drug traffickers with longer sentences, removing them from our streets and limiting their ability to victimize our citizens. We once were able to provide harsher sentences to those that traffic drugs with guns and sold poison

within a specified distance from our schools. We have yet to see the true effect from removing these sentencing guidelines and I urge you as a person who is on the front line of this issue to rethink this strategy and reinstate mandatory minimum sentencing before our communities suffer a real negative impact.

The second issue that I would like to bring to your attention is the need to regulate and license drug recovery homes. Recovery homes have grown throughout our City and many have little oversight over the people who stay within them for treatment. These homes literally sit within the same neighborhoods most prone to drug selling with dealers strategically posted in front waiting to victimize those inside. Off the top of my head I can think of two cases in which drug overdoses have occurred inside these properties and I am sure there are more if we dig deep. Talking to those with addiction problems I have heard plenty of stories detailing how dealers are allowed to frequent properties due to the lack of oversight. Imagine the horror of well-meaning family members who help send their loved one to these facilities only to learn they are being further victimized. Once victimized by those promising to help what are the chances that an individual will seek further treatment? I am by no means saying that all of the recovery houses are bad or victimizing those seeking treatment but it is prevalent and may best be addressed through legislation and oversight.

Recent legislation allowing law enforcement to utilize naloxone has allowed us to save countless persons who would otherwise be dead from an overdose. Within the five square miles of York City alone we have saved 10 individuals lives since May of this year. Most of these persons would have undoubtedly been dead had legislation not been changed. Once the person's life is saved what options exist for quality treatment and what are we doing to remove violent drug dealers from our streets? I urge you to continue to utilize the resources at your hands to aide us with meaningful legislation. Thank you again for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.