



House passes bill to help newborns suffering from opiate dependency

The Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015 ([H.R. 1462](#)), legislation that takes proactive steps to help hospitals diagnose and treat newborns suffering from opiate dependency, has passed the U.S. House. The bill was sponsored by Reps. [Steve Stivers](#) (Dist. 15-Hilliard) and Katherine Clark (MA).



Over the years there has been a significant rise in the abuse of opiates, which has led to an alarming increase of babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). NAS is a collection of symptoms that infants can experience as a result of prenatal exposure to drugs such as heroin, methadone and prescription painkillers. Upon being born, this exposure to the drug ends and the babies begin to suffer from withdrawal.

The Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015 is a targeted effort to make NAS a national priority by bringing together the appropriate experts and data to develop a coordinated response. The bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a best practices handbook for dealing with NAS and designate an agency to collect NAS data.

Other Ohio representatives signing on as co-sponsors include Joyce Beatty (Dist.3-Columbus), Marcia Fudge (Dist.11-Warrensville Heights), Bill Johnson (Dist. 6-Marietta), David Joyce (Dist. 14-Painesville), Marcy Kaptur (Dist. 9-Toledo), Tim Ryan (Dist. 13-Warren), Pat Tiberi (Dist. 12-Columbus) and Mike Turner (Dist. 10-Dayton).

The bill now heads to the U.S. Senate where Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) have introduced companion legislation. [Read more...](#)