

# HB 226 – Opposition Testimony

## June 7, 2017

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### **On behalf of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild (OPAG)**

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chairman Reineke, and members of the committee, I am Bruce Blom, co-founder and past president of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild – OPAG. Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in opposition to House Bill 226.

OPAG is an educational and fraternal association of Ohio licensed exhibitors and licensed assistants, founded in 1997. I've attached a copy of the goals of OPAG and reading those you might wonder why I, as an OPAG representative, stand before you in opposition to HB 226.

First let me make clear that we are not in the business of selling 1.3g (display) or 1.4g (consumer) fireworks. We are consumers of these products in that we provide our expertise to licensed firms to conduct displays on their behalf. We also purchase these products from Ohio-licensed sources for our use at Guild events.

At every opportunity we have argued against the perpetuation of the moratorium that has shackled this industry for 20+ years. A handful of people have created an impediment to free trade and competition to the detriment of consumers and other interested parties. Why previous legislatures have supported the continued renewal of the moratorium I cannot fathom. Now, thanks to Representative Seitz's perseverance we stand on the cusp of ending this egregious practice. I am delighted to see Representative Sweeney has chosen to co-sponsor the bill, making this a clear bipartisan initiative.

So, why are we opposed to HB 226? If HB 226 were only about 1.4g sales, sales locations, use of product by the public, fees, taxes, etc., we would not be opposed. But the incorporation of 1.3g issues, the concordant time lines and study group composition are, in our opinion, counterproductive. Those issues should be addressed separately from the 1.4g issues and at a much accelerated pace. We fear the proposed study committee will become bogged down on the 1.4g issues and relegate other issues to a secondary status. Specifically, we are extremely interested in the elimination of the manufacturing moratorium, restrictions on 1.3g storage, modification of the term "manufacturing" to make it consistent with other Ohio and Federal usage, modifications to that portion (ORC 3743.59) dealing with variances, and other portions of the current law. These can and should be addressed on a separate track, independent of the 1.4g sales issues, and at an expedited pace.

# Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild

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The Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild, Inc. is a nonprofit association of fireworks professionals, apprentices, individuals and enthusiasts.

The purpose of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild, Inc., (OPAG) founded in 1997, shall be to:

1. Promote the safe and sane display and use of pyrotechnics.
2. Encourage the legal display of public and private pyrotechnics in conjunction with personal, local and national holidays and patriotic events.
3. Promote the production and sale of high quality pyrotechnics.
4. Channel the creative energies of talented people into design, production and display of high quality pyrotechnics.
5. Provide a voice for the exhibitors, hobbyists, educators, amateur, and professional fireworks enthusiasts.
6. Provide a venue for the state of Ohio to provide continuing education for display exhibitors and apprentices.
7. Monitor legislation and lobby for legislation affecting pyrotechnics in Ohio.
8. Have fun.