

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing today to show my support for the Ohio Urban Homesteading bill in allowing backyard chickens in suburban settings.

In 2010 I started experiencing unexplained health problems. Allergic reactions, such as rashes and intestinal issues to foods I had previously been ok with. Along with a rapid heart rate, hair loss and weight loss. It made me take a closer look at what I was eating and what additives do to our bodies. In 2011 I joined the Farm-to-Table movement and began looking at how I could grow more of my own food and become more self sufficient. After some confusion on the city codes in regards to backyard chickens, I called my city hall and asked if they were permitted. I was told it shouldn't be an issue as long as I didn't have roosters and my neighbors were ok with it. So we built a cute little Martha Stewart coop and I bought 4 one day old chicks. I was excited to begin raising my own chickens again and to teach my 3 young boys something that I had grown up doing.

In 2012 I received a letter saying I was being cited for violating our city code and housing farm animals. I was shocked. I had meetings with city council reps and ask for a variance to which I was told "Don't waste your money. We're on the board and we'll deny it." I wrote letters to the mayor and collected over 300 signatures on a petition to change the ordinance. After over \$400 in fines and fighting city hall for a couple months, it was clear that I wasn't going to be able to keep our now beloved family pets.

In the fall of 2014 I closed out my 401k and purchased 13 acres so I could continue to grow my own food and raise chickens. I was a single mom raising 3 boys and there was no way I could afford to buy all organic, pasture raised food for all of us. I was determined that they grow up knowing how important it is to know where our food comes from and that they not develop the health problems I have. I was diagnosed with Graves disease and the artificial additives in foods such as hormones, dyes and preservatives as well as GMO greatly effect my health.

I still have my suburban home in Columbus and will continue to live here until my sons graduate from high school. Being able to have some control over our food (and still live in a good school district) is important enough for me to make that sacrifice. I feel for my friends and neighbors that want chickens but don't have the financial ability to purchase additional land. I hope that this bill will pass to give everyone the opportunity to have a say in what goes into their bodies. Our local government is eroding our property rights and its often influenced by uneducated citizens and their bigotry for what they perceive to be a low class life style.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions for me I can be reached at the number and address below.

Donna Perry

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