



MEMORANDUM

To: House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
From: Representative Bill Seitz, Representative Martin Sweeney
Date: May, 2017
Re: HB 226 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing us to offer sponsor testimony on HB 226.

Are you tired of being complicit in state law that makes liars out of thousands of Ohioans who can purchase consumer-grade fireworks in Ohio only if they attest that they will be discharged out of state? We are. Do you agree we need a comprehensive review of Ohio fireworks laws to promote safety, preserve local control, and promote regulated competition, rather than simply extending the current moratorium on new licenses to make and sell fireworks in Ohio? We hope so. Representative Sweeney and I present to you today a piece of legislation that is made up of two parts:

1. Beginning July 1, 2020, the moratorium on firework licenses, that has been in place for over two decades, will be terminated.
2. A Fireworks Study Group will be created immediately that will review several key aspects of the fireworks industry and their relationship with the state and issues its recommendations on or before July 1, 2019. This study group will include members from the General Assembly, the State Fire Marshal, a local fire chief, a local police chief, members from the State Pyrotechnics Association, and a member of Prevent Blindness Ohio.

One important piece of this legislation is that should the legislature fail to act on the Study Group's recommendations by July 1, 2020, then the language from SB 386 of the 130th General Assembly will be enacted effective that date. SB 386 is the same bill that passed the Senate by a 22-7 vote in 2014, and ran out of time to be enacted in our Chamber.

That legislation preserved local control over the discharging of fireworks, stepped up safety requirements, directed an end to the moratorium, charged the Fire Marshal with the task of developing

rules for new fireworks retail operations and dispensed with the “liars form” under which Ohioans had to swear not to discharge fireworks in Ohio in order to buy fireworks in Ohio.

Thank you again, for allowing us to present sponsor testimony on HB 226, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.