



State Representative Martin J. Sweeney

14th Ohio House District

Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 226

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

To reiterate what my joint sponsor has said, what we have right now is lawlessness. We pretend that when someone signs that waiver that they're not taking the fireworks the next city over and setting them off. But come the 4th of July and every night in the surrounding weeks before and after, we all hear that familiar sound.

The current law makes no sense and reminds me of another law that made no sense. That being 3.2 beer. Either you allow fireworks or not. You allow 18-year-olds to drink beer or not.

The only way we can get rid of fireworks is to outlaw fun and enjoyment, which I don't think is happening anytime soon. Therefore, it is imperative we get this right. This legislation allows us to do just that. It will allow us to regulate, permit and enforce the sale and use of fireworks in our state. This won't just be some legislators setting the laws, instead the study group this legislation establishes is where the real work will be done. Let's take a quick look at some of our surrounding neighbors.

Indiana:

- Must be 18 and older to buy, use or possess fireworks
- Fireworks can only be used on the user's property, property of someone who granted permission for them to be discharged, or a place designated by the Fire Marshal
- May only be discharged between 9 am to 11 pm except for on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day and New Years' Eve. On those holidays, the time is extended to midnight.
- Prohibits being under the influence of alcohol

Michigan:

- Must be 18 and older
- Must be on private property and have permission of the property owner
- May not be under the influence of alcohol

- Local municipalities are able to restrict the days and times that fireworks are able to be launched

Kentucky:

- Allows local municipalities to set restrictions on days and times that fireworks are able to be launched
- Prohibits anyone under 18 to purchase fireworks
- Prohibits the use of alcohol while launching fireworks
- Cannot be used within 200 feet of any structure

This Study Group of all interested parties will accomplish the goals of regulating, permitting and enforcing the use of fireworks. At the end of the day, we need to have a State of Ohio that is a safe environment for the discharge of fireworks for the enjoyment of all Ohioans within our cities, our townships, and our villages. Thank you for the honor and privilege to testify before the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. I look forward to any questions you may have, your active participation in this process and hopefully your eventual support of this legislation.