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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 523
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Before the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

Hello Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 522. This legislation looks to fill a gap in the designated outdoor refreshment area (DORA) legislation approved during the last General Assembly under House Bill 47 sponsored by Chairman Blessing and Representative Driehaus.

Many cities, including Middletown (the first to adopt), Canton, Toledo, Hilliard and Worthington, have instituted DORAs. The goal of House Bill 47 was to provide an exemption to the Open Container Law and allow a patron to carry an open alcoholic beverage within the designated area, if the container is purchased from a specified liquor permit holder with a DORA designation. In other words, if I purchase a beer from a local bar with a DORA designation I can walk around the designated refreshment area with my open container. I cannot, however, leave the designated area or cross the threshold into another establishment even if that restaurant or bar is in the DORA area.

In my district and many others however, a DORA would conflict with a temporary, charitable festival, for which F permits are offered. For example, every year Grove City hosts a Wine and Arts festival, which draws about 30,000 wine and art enthusiasts from all over Ohio and beyond. The two-day festival operates under a temporary F permit. Under HB 47, however, temporary F permits are not allowed in a DORA. According to representatives from the Wholesale Beer and Wine Association this was an oversight; one we would like to correct with this bill.

Under this bill an F class, temporary charitable permit holder (like the Grove City Wine and Arts festival in my example) that sponsors an event located in the outdoor refreshment may apply to the liquor control division for issuance of a DORA designation provided the statutory guidelines are met.

In practice HB 522 will allow a couple, split on a beverage of choice, to grab a wine from the arts festival, a beer from Plank's and meet in the DORA to enjoy the beautiful downtown art exhibit. In the last GA, Chairman Blessing stated that House Bill 47 was about economic development and bringing more business to different areas around the state. I believe that HB 522 will complement this legislation by allowing patrons of businesses who are participating in festivals to utilize the DORA as well.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 522. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.

