

HB 65 Proponent Testimony
Presented by Rich Neumann, Director of Culinary Services/Assistant Professor
Before the House State and Local Government Committee
Chair Marlene Anielski

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bishoff and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on HB 65. My name is Rich Neumann, and I am the Director of Culinary Services and an adjunct professor in the Restaurant, Hotel, and Tourism Program at Ohio University. First a bit of background on myself. I have worked in various culinary management positions at Ohio University since 1989 and have served as Director for the last eleven years. I have worked in the food service industry for a total of 37 years. As an adjunct professor I have taught Food Sanitation and Safety for 26 years. I hold a Master of Science Degree in Nutrition and Food Science and a Bachelor's Degree in Dietetics and Food Service Management both from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Throughout my professional career I have always worked to promote the importance of food safety to my staff. Culinary Services at Ohio University understands the science behind food safety and works hard to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and guests are served quality food that is safe. We ServSafe certify all members of our management team and fulltime employees and employ a fulltime Quality Assurance/HACCP Manager. We are in the process of level one certifying all of our student leaders whose main duty is to train and supervise our student workforce. Our practice and training in safe food handling centers around HACCP principles. The best way to safeguard the food that is served is to concentrate on eliminating critical violations that are the most likely items to cause foodborne illness.

I support HB 65 sponsored by Representative Brian Hill because it recognizes the necessity for operators to operate together with local health departments across the state to protect the public's health rather than being placed into an adversarial position. If health inspectors are required to conduct inspections with primary objective of finding as many faults as they can in an operation rather than focus on critical violations, it places an undue focus on items of lesser importance instead of finding critical violations that can make people ill and even cause death.

Compliance with the food code is not optional. However, working with health inspectors to take a common sense approach to non-critical violations while demanding immediate action regarding critical violations is the best way to ensure compliance with the food code.

Ultimately, the approach to food safety inspections outlined in HB 65 will raise the bar related to food safety in Ohio, and will better protect all Ohioans from contracting a foodborne illness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this legislation. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.