



December 4, 2018

Representative Marlene Anielski
House State and Local Government Committee Chairwoman
77 S. High Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Representative Anielski:

On behalf of the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA), I am writing in support of HB 65 and provisions to evaluate Registered Sanitarians' knowledge and implementation of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code through a written or electronic assessment. This legislative change would provide an appropriate solution to determine sanitarian knowledge of the food code and its application for the evaluation portion of a local health department's food safety program survey conducted by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA).

The ORA believes the current food survey process evaluations of local health department sanitarians does not effectively and efficiently assess sanitarian knowledge or ability to apply the food code. The evaluations artificially increase the number of violations cited during survey inspections, substantially lengthen the duration of inspections, deteriorate the relationship between operators and sanitarians, will likely lead to increased license fees, and place undue emphasis on noncritical violations which does not improve food safety outcomes for the people of Ohio.

The ORA believes this amendment provides a common-sense solution to issues with the current food survey process. The amendment requires ODH and ODA to create a written or electronic assessment that shall be no more than 50 questions in which a sanitarian must correctly answer 80% to achieve a passing score. Additionally, ODH and ODA would be required to develop the assessment with the Ohio Environmental Health Association which represents sanitarians and the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners. Quite simply, this amendment creates a mechanism to appropriately assess sanitarian knowledge and ability to apply the food code while simultaneously eliminating an over-burdensome field survey process that directly leads to excessive regulation throughout Ohio.

ORA members interact with local health department sanitarians every day and work alongside local sanitarians to gain compliance and prevent foodborne illness. The best approach to food safety is a collaborative approach between regulators and regulated facilities. ORA support for this amendment is an excellent example of this philosophy in action. This amendment allows local health departments and sanitarians to focus more on food safety instead of a burdensome process that over-regulates food facilities and devalues inspections.

On behalf of the ORA and the 22,000+ restaurants in Ohio, we urge your support of the enclosed amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Barker".

John Barker
President and CEO
Ohio Restaurant Association