



February 5, 2018

Ohio Senate Finance Committee

RE: Support for HB 329: Anti-Pyramid Scheme Legislation

Dear Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee:

Stampin' Up! Inc. sells decorative art and craft products throughout the United States and in nine foreign countries through independent sellers ("demonstrators"). Our demonstrators (primarily women) sell these products as a part-time basis in home parties and similar venues. We have 1,237 demonstrators in the State of Ohio and would like to voice our support for HB210, sponsored by Representative Dorothy Pelanda. The bill would clearly define and establish penalties for operating or participating in a pyramid promotional scheme.

The current law is deficient and does not draw a clear line of delineation between legitimate direct selling companies and pyramid schemes. The lack of a clear pyramid scheme in statute may create confusion among the public, particularly when considering that some pyramid schemes masquerade as legitimate direct selling companies to defraud consumers.

This bill clearly defines a pyramid scheme as any plan or operation in which compensation is provided primarily for the recruitment of others and makes clear that personal use of products in a legitimate business practice. This legislation is needed to protect consumers because pyramid schemes are illegal businesses that defraud consumers. It would give law enforcement in Ohio more guidance on identifying and prosecuting pyramid schemes and guide legitimate direct selling companies on what constitutes acceptable business practices.

The bill would clearly differentiate the legal income earning opportunities offered by legitimate direct selling companies from the scams perpetrated by fly-by-night promoters of pyramid schemes. Encouraging adoption of a right of return for inventory purchased by individual direct sellers.

This language is largely derived from model legislation endorsed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) in 2004. This model or similar models have been adopted in 21 states. The bill protects consumers by providing guidance on identifying illegal businesses and provides clarity for legitimate direct selling companies on ethical business practices.

Nobody wins when pyramids schemes prevail. Not consumers or legitimate direct selling companies. **Stampin' Up! urges you to vote for HB 329 to protect consumers and provide guidance to legitimate direct selling companies.** Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Douglass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Douglass
Chief Executive Officer
Stampin' Up! Inc., a Utah corporation