



State Representative Martin J. Sweeney

14th Ohio House District

Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 226

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni, distinguished members of the Government Oversight and Reform 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 a law that does not work. My first question to anyone I discuss this bill with is “do you like how things currently are when it comes to the discharging of fireworks?” and not one person says yes. In my opinion, it is bad policy to pass laws that are not enforceable. There are groups and individuals who would like to see an outright ban but I do not believe that will be happening anytime soon. This legislation – as we see it - very simply puts some structure and parameters in place regarding the discharge of fireworks.

The two things that are most important (in my eyes) regarding this piece of legislation is home rule and the all-inclusive study group, which I believe will produce a great product for the citizens of the State of Ohio. 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. Below, you will see a quick overview of what some of our surrounding neighbors have done.

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 Oversight and Reform Committee. I look forward to any questions you may have, your active participation in this process and hopefully your eventual support of this legislation.