

HB 226 – Proponent Testimony

December

On behalf of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild (OPAG)

Chairman Coley, Vice-Chairman Uecker, and members of the committee, I am Bruce Blom, co-founder and past president of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild – OPAG. Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in support of House Bill 226.

OPAG is an educational and fraternal association of Ohio licensed exhibitors and licensed assistants, founded in 1997. I've attached a copy of the goals of OPAG and in reading those you can understand why we would support efforts to revisit and hopefully modernize current Ohio law regarding fireworks.

This committee will hear much testimony, pro and con, focused on the sale to, and use by the general public, of 1.4g (consumer) fireworks. While we are supportive of wider sale and use of 1.4g fireworks, we wish to emphasize that we are not in the business of selling 1.4g or 1.3g (display) fireworks. We are consumers of these products in that we provide our expertise to licensed firms to conduct displays on their behalf. We also purchase these products from Ohio-licensed sources for our use at Guild events.

However, there are many other parts to current law that need to be addressed, particularly with respect to storage and manufacturing. The current moratorium, that has shackled this industry for 20+ years, has caused a major impediment to free trade, competition and product development, to the detriment of consumers and other interested parties. Now, thanks to Representative Seitz and Sweeney's bipartisan initiative and perseverance we stand on the cusp of ending the egregious practices fostered by the current law. OPAG remains optimistic that, if passed, the proposed Study Group will see the merits in evaluating and adopting the practices of our neighboring states and less on home-grown regulatory overkill.

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The Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild, Inc. is a nonprofit association of fireworks professionals, apprentices, individuals and enthusiasts.

The purpose of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild, Inc., (OPAG) founded in 1997, shall be to:

1. Promote the safe and sane display and use of pyrotechnics.
2. Encourage the legal display of public and private pyrotechnics in conjunction with personal, local and national holidays and patriotic events.
3. Promote the production and sale of high quality pyrotechnics.
4. Channel the creative energies of talented people into design, production and display of high quality pyrotechnics.
5. Provide a voice for the exhibitors, hobbyists, educators, amateur, and professional fireworks enthusiasts.
6. Provide a venue for the state of Ohio to provide continuing education for display exhibitors and apprentices.
7. Monitor legislation and lobby for legislation affecting pyrotechnics in Ohio.
8. Have fun.