



**P. O. Box 440 – Cicero, IN 46034**

December 11, 2019  
House Bill 253 Proponent Testimony  
Eric Turner

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chair Dean and Ranking Member Lapore-Hagan, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent on House Bill 253. My name is Eric Turner and I want to applaud Representative Don Manning's efforts to bring this much needed reform to Ohio's fireworks laws.

Our company, American Promotional Events, Inc. (sold under the TNT Fireworks brand), will celebrate 100 years selling fireworks this next year. Our company offers a wide variety of products to our more than 45,000 retail customers across the United States. We have one TNT Fireworks Supercenter in Dayton but primarily work with over 1,400 retail partners in Ohio. In Ohio, our sales have been limited to hand-held sparklers and novelty items that are currently the only fireworks permissible for sale by Chain Retailers and Mom & Pop stores.

As you know, House Bill 253 will finally allow Ohioans to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with fireworks and without breaking the law. The bill also brings Ohio in-line with the vast majority of other states that allow for ground-based sparklers to be sold in retail stores. Ground Based Sparklers or Fountains are non-explosive and non-aerial devices that simply emit a shower of sparks. These fountains are often sold with hand-held sparklers and novelty items in assortment packages. Attached to this letter is a picture showing two different types of assortments — with and without the fountain sparklers included. Our company ships the assortment with the fountains to every state except Ohio, Illinois, Vermont and Massachusetts. With the passage of this bill, our Ohio retailers, including Wal\*Mart, Target, Meijer, Sam's, Costco and Kroger, among many others, will have the opportunity to sell these products to Ohio consumers for their own family 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations.

Our retail partners welcome this proposed change as an exciting new offering to their customers. Our retail stores have agreed that to sell these new devices, the store must be licensed by the Ohio State Fire Marshal, collect a 4% tax on the sale of the fountains and must adhere to the National Fire Protection Association Code 1124. Furthermore, these fountains are only to be sold in retail stores and only to those 18 years old or older. Just as my company believes in the utmost importance of safety, our retail partners are committed to ensuring these new items will be sold in a safe and responsible manner.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, I want to thank Representative Don Manning for his efforts on this issue. I also want to thank others in the fireworks industry. Although we compete against one another in the marketplace, we were able to come together and reach a compromise with the legislation now in front of your committee. House Bill 253 will benefit retailers in Ohio, while also allowing Ohio citizens to enjoy the celebration of our freedom, in a safe and enjoyable way.

I urge the committee's support of House Bill 253 and would be happy to answer any questions.