



**Representative DJ Swearingen**  
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**77<sup>th</sup> House District**

**Business Expansion and Safety Act Sponsor Testimony**

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Business Expansion and Safety Act. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many of our state's restaurants, bars, breweries and wineries to suffer. The intent of this legislation is to allow these businesses to regain some of the revenue they have lost during this unprecedented time, while also being able to serve their customers and keep Ohioans safe.

This piece of legislation gives these business owners greater flexibility to not only bring in more revenue during these trying times, but it will also provide customers and employees of these establishments a safer and more social distanced friendly environment. Restaurants and bars were recently permitted to open outdoor dining and tomorrow indoor dining will resume. Many protocols have

been set in place and we've seen multiple news reports of restaurants/bars receiving complaints and potential citations for individuals allegedly not following the guidelines. The bill allows for further outside spaces to be available for these establishments, and lays the foundation to not only protect these places from getting overcrowded, but gives more opportunity for individuals and restaurants to comply with social distancing guidelines. While the number of customers these businesses can serve will be limited during this pandemic, the Business Expansion and Safety Act will provide for an expansion of their premises to maximize sales while maintaining a safer environment.

The Business Expansion and Safety Act also allows permit holders to sell any alcohol to customers for carry out purposes or deliver alcohol to customers itself, or by utilizing a third party like Grub Hub for instance.

We believe that this bill balances the safety of owners, workers, and customers while also aiding main street businesses as Ohio comes back from Covid 19.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on this piece of legislation. We are happy to take any questions the Committee may have at this time.