

House Commerce & Labor Committee
Chairperson Gayle Manning & Ranking Member Michele Lepore-Hagan
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
HB 669 – Sale, Delivery - Alcohol
Opponent Testimony by
David P. Corey, Executive VP – Bowling Centers Association of Ohio &
the Ohio Coin Machine Association

Chairperson Manning, Vice Chairperson Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan & House Commerce & Labor Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you regarding HB 669, which would allow on premise D-permit establishments to sell alcohol on a “to-go” basis permanently. As mentioned, my name is David Corey, and I’m representing two organizations today as their Executive Vice President - the Bowling Centers Association of Ohio, which consists of 150 of the 225 bowling centers in the state of Ohio, and the Ohio Coin Machine Association, which is made up of 52 companies that operate jukeboxes, pool tables, electronic dart machines and video games in bars and other d-permit locations. In total, both organizations represent approximately 6,000 Ohio employees.

During COVID-19, the legislature wisely allowed bars to serve alcohol on a “to-go” basis as a temporary measure to help businesses during financial hardship while they were closed due to the Governor’s Stay Safe at Home Order. While we believe that was a good idea while businesses were closed, we are not in support of that policy being permanent. The main reason is that the key to the long-term success of bricks and mortar hospitality businesses and their partners (like coin machine companies) is attracting and maintaining customers INSIDE their establishments.

By allowing this temporary policy to become permanent, it hurts hospitality businesses by taking people out of their locations. No one plays that extra song on the jukebox, or the extra game of darts or pool. The bowler may decide to take the drink home instead of bowling another game while having that last beer. All these factors will actually hurt these businesses in the long-term. The policy, which we supported while people were ordered to stay at home and while bars and bowling centers were closed was a good idea, but we believe it should not become permanent law.

We also believe it will hurt KENO sales as it takes people out of the locations where KENO is most successful. And, as we all know, the state needs as much income as possible to offset looming budget cuts. Finally, we are puzzled why convenient stores, grocery stores and organizations like MADD are not opposed to HB 699, it seems that it is counterintuitive to their business operations and policies. Anyway, for these and other reasons (such as having an open container while driving) we believe HB 699 should not receive favorable consideration for passage. Thank you and I’d be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.