



**House Bill 135 – Proponent Testimony
Kristin Mullins, President/CEO
Ohio Grocers Association – November 5, 2019**

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Minority Member Rogers, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony in support of House Bill 135, legislation to enhance Ohio’s back-to-school sales tax holiday by increasing the dollar threshold on clothing, school supplies, other school instructional materials and adding laptops, netbooks and tablets.

As President of the Ohio Grocers Association, I proudly represent nearly 400 food retailers, wholesalers and suppliers across the state. My members range from the largest chain stores to the smallest “mom and pop” independent grocers as well as the wholesalers who supply these stores. Today, more and more retailers are offering new nontraditional products in their stores. Many of my members are selling non-food items including clothes and school supplies.

OGA supported the creation of Ohio’s first ever sales tax holiday in 2015 and subsequent reauthorizations resulting in the permanent holiday starting this year. Our sales tax holiday generates greater foot traffic in stores, leading to overall higher retail sales across the board. Additionally, the data confirmed that significant cross-border shopping has occurred with Ohio’s border counties experiencing an increase in sales tax collections during the holiday.

It is important to maintain this growing momentum and enhance Ohio’s sales tax holiday by increasing the thresholds and adding additional items. House Bill 135 achieves this goal by further stimulating our economy and by giving the consumer a much-needed boost during the expensive back to school season. This legislation has the full support of the Ohio Grocers Association.

We commend the leadership of Representative Antani for his sponsorship of this important legislation and urge your favorable consideration of House Bill 135.

