



**State Representatives
Jack Cera & John Patterson**

House Bill 57

Joint Sponsor Testimony

Ways and Means Committee - Feb. 4, 2020

Chair Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee --- thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 57. Rep. John Patterson and I are joint sponsors on this legislation, but he could not be here today. This bill exempts from sales and use taxes, the bulk sale of firewood and certain other heating fuels. Our bill also calls for reimbursing the Local Government Fund, Public Library Fund, and county and transit sales tax collections for any resulting revenue losses.

We believe that Ohioans are unfairly paying more in taxes than necessary for homes that heat with coal, firewood, kerosene, liquid petroleum (propane) and #2 fuel oil purchased in bulk. Simply put, just because you use one of the sources listed above instead of natural gas to heat your home, you should not have to pay additional taxes.

Ohio has a long tradition of exempting certain items of necessity from sales and use taxes. With natural gas already being exempt from sales and use taxes, it simply makes sense to us to establish a level playing field and create an exemption for other forms of heating fuels. In many areas across the state, residents are geographically removed from or otherwise lack access to services that would provide tax-exempt options to heat their home.

The main objective of this bill is to ease the financial burden on working families. Homeownership is a fundamental tenet of the American Dream, but in recent years, the state has only made it more expensive for Ohioans to have a place to call home. Anything we can do to help families keep hold of that dream is more important now than ever before.

At the same time, we cannot continue to take away essential funding from local communities. This only compounds the issues I have just described. A critical component of our bill would require the state to reimburse any local revenue losses as a result of the sales tax exemption.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill. We would be glad to answer any questions or address any concerns the committee may have.