

Opponent Testimony on SB 72
Submitted by Stan Anderson, MD on behalf of the
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Before the Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 72. As President of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, I am submitting these comments on behalf of the 5,100 family physician, family medicine resident and medical student members of the OAFP.

SB 72 is the latest attempt to legalize the discharge of consumer fireworks in Ohio. Past attempts have consistently failed and we hope you will reject this latest effort. If enacted, SB 72 would make Ohio one of the most open-ended states for fireworks discharge. While it's true that many states allow for some type of discharge of consumer grade fireworks, most of those states place restrictions on the times and dates of discharge, limit the types of products that can be discharged, and limit the times of year when fireworks can be purchased. SB 72 contains no such restrictions.

Studies have shown that the legalization of fireworks discharge results in an increase in both the frequency and severity of fireworks injuries. Half of all fireworks injuries are to innocent bystanders while nearly one-third are to children. OAFP supports the efforts of Governor DeWine and the General Assembly in prioritizing child health and wellness, but this bill seems to directly conflict with the worthy goal of protecting Ohio children from harm.

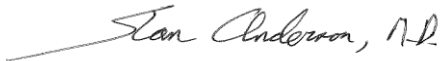
SB 72 also includes new language allowing some types of consumer grade fireworks to be sold outside of fireworks retail locations. Currently only novelty fireworks can be sold in traditional retail locations, however SB 72 would circumvent this restriction. We firmly believe that consumer grade fireworks should only be sold in fireworks retail locations, which are subject to strict fire code regulations.

The bill also creates a study committee that is dominated by fireworks industry officials. We support charging a fair and balanced study committee with making recommendations about statutory changes prior to consideration of legislation like SB 72.

Passage of SB 72 is not in the best interest of protecting the safety of Ohio's children and families. Even though some Ohioans choose to ignore the current law, having a statewide

prohibition on discharge sends a clear message that this is a dangerous activity and should be left to experts who know what they are doing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stan Anderson, MD". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

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