



Ohio Ophthalmological Society

Eye MDs and Surgeons Dedicated to Preserving Vision

To: Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee
From: Reginald Fields, Director, Ohio Ophthalmological Society
Re: Senate Bill 72
Date: May 28, 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 written opponent testimony on Senate Bill 72 on behalf of the Ohio Ophthalmological Society (OOS). My name is Reginald Fields and I am director of the OOS.

Studies have shown that discharging fireworks can result in severe eye injuries, sometimes permanently altering vision. As the most advanced group of eye doctors, ophthalmologists too often see firsthand the damage so-called “backyard fireworks” can cause. Half of these injuries are to innocent bystanders, while nearly one-third are to children.

I’d like to highlight a few additional concerns regarding SB 72 for your consideration:

- While it is true some states allow for the discharge of various types of consumer grade fireworks, they also add 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.
- SB 72 also includes language that would expand the list of places where consumer grade fireworks can be sold. These products should continue to be sold only in approved fireworks retail locations and subjected to fire code regulations.
- Proponents of SB 72, who represent the fireworks industry, remain focused on industry-related regulatory matters including the permitting process under the Ohio Department of Commerce. However, it must be noted that there have been no calls to legalize discharge from average Ohioans for this piece of legislation or past fireworks measures.

In closing, I want to again stress that passage of SB 72 is not in the best interest of Ohio 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 avoided. Thank you for your time and careful consideration.