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Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation and Workforce Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for HB 253, which will update our state's antiquated fireworks laws.

Ohio's fireworks laws have gone largely unchanged for decades, while all our bordering states permit the sale and use of fireworks. Because of this, our citizens are allowed to purchase fireworks in Ohio, but required to travel to another state to set them off legally.

House Bill 253 would make Ohio the 49th state in the country to allow fireworks usage by permitting any person authorized to purchase consumer grade fireworks permission to discharge, ignite, or explode those fireworks on the person's own property or with the property owner's permission.

A central component of this legislation is that House Bill 253 gives complete local control to our local governments by giving them the ability to restrict the dates and times a person may discharge, ignite or explode consumer fireworks.

The bill also funds firefighter-training programs by imposing a fee on the retail sale of consumer fireworks. Those fees are credited to firefighter training programs and to the State Fire Marshal's regulation and enforcement of the fireworks industry.

In addition, the bill establishes the Ohio Fire Code Rule Recommendation Committee. This committee will review Ohio's Fireworks law and make recommendations to the State Fire Marshal. The committee is composed of representatives of the fireworks industry, fire officials and health officials.

Simply put, this legislation is long overdue. House Bill 253 would no longer force Ohioans to transport out of the state within 48 hours, fireworks they have purchased in Ohio, in order to comply with Ohio's fireworks law. It allows our citizens to enjoy Fourth of July celebrations safely and legally as 49 other states in this country do. We respectfully ask for your support.