

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF OHIO SPORTSMEN'S BILL  
(SB 257/HB 518)

Honorable Committee members, thank you for giving me this opportunity to express support for the proposed Ohio Sportsmen's bill. I'm Dennis Grant, an attorney here in Columbus. I have been an Ohio volunteer Hunter Education Instructor for more than 30 years. On a pro bono basis, I performed the legal work necessary to create the Ohio Hunter and Trapper Education Instructors Association, a 501(C) (3) corporation designed to improve the effectiveness of Ohio's corp of volunteer instructors. More recently, I performed the legal work to create Disabled Veterans Outdoors, another 501(C)(3) corporation which provides volunteer guides, among other services, to assist disabled veterans in enjoying Ohio's hunting, fishing and camping opportunities.

I consider myself a history buff. Just as none of us wants to see historic register buildings razed, there are other strong family and friend traditional activities many of us would prefer not to see fade into oblivion. Hunting is one I would personally miss should that happen. Fishing too was a recreational sport my family frequently enjoyed together.

While the pending bill would strengthen the likely sustainability of those two important Ohio traditions, I like to speak to two other important aspects of the bill: (1) Increased resources for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, and (2) Enhanced access to Ohio's outdoor resources for the disabled.

Regarding the Ohio Division of Wildlife, it is a model of what state administrative agencies should be. From a revenue prospective, it is largely self-sufficient. It has had remarkable success in establishing an extraordinary herd of whitetail deer; in re-establishing Ohio's wild turkey flock; and in making Lake Erie one of the best walleye fisheries in the world, only to name a few of its more well-known successes. In terms of hunter safety, the Division's training, guidance

and cooperation with the corp of Hunter Education Instructors has made hunting one of the safest recreational sports in the country. I may have this wrong, but in Ohio more young people incur injuries in the sport of cheerleading than in the sport of hunting.

Some of us have led rather privileged lives. We are health and have mobility. Not all Ohioans are that fortunate. But, some who have been disabled in the service of our country and some who have been dealt a bad hand by nature are Ohio citizens, too. They can continue to benefit our society with their judgment and innovations. We can only partially compensation them by making the state's magnificence resources more available. On behalf of all Ohioan, therefore, I urge you to do that by promoting passage of this highly beneficial bill.