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March 6, 2018

The Honorable Tim Schaffer, Chairman
Ohio House Ways & Means Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Schaffer:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 226, legislation to make permanent an exemption of back-to-school clothing, school supplies, and other school instructional materials from the Ohio sales and use tax during a three-day period in August each year.

As President of the Ohio Grocers Association, I proudly represent nearly 400 food retailers, wholesalers and suppliers across the state. My members range from the largest chain stores to the smallest "mom and pop" independent grocers as well as the wholesalers who supply these stores. Today, more and more retailers are offering new nontraditional products in their stores. Many of my members are selling non-food items including clothes and school supplies.

OGA supported the creation of Ohio's first ever sales tax holiday in 2015 and subsequent reauthorizations in 2016 and this past year. According to a study by the University of Cincinnati Economics Center, the 2015 tax holiday alone, saved consumers \$3.3 million and provided the state and local governments and with an additional \$4.7 million in sales tax revenue. Furthermore, the sales tax holiday generated greater foot traffic in stores, leading to overall higher retail sales across the board. Additionally, the data confirmed that significant cross-border shopping occurred with Ohio's border counties experiencing a 15.48% increase in sales tax collections during the holiday.

It is important to maintain this growing momentum and reauthorize Ohio's sales tax holiday this year and to make it permanent moving forward. Senate Bill 226 achieves this goal by further stimulating our economy and by giving the consumer a much-needed boost during the expensive back to school season. This legislation has the full support of the Ohio Grocers Association.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kristin Mullins
President/CEO