

Chairman Kris Jordan  
General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee  
May 23, 2017

Good Morning Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brian and members of the Senate Finance General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee. My name is Andrew Peterson and I am a general dentist from Findlay, Ohio. I would like to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to address the committee regarding the proposed license fee increases for Ohio's sportsmen and women.

While I respect the goal behind the proposed fee increases, I believe that simply increasing fees is only masking the greater issues facing the sporting public in Ohio. I grew up hunting and fishing in Ohio and Pennsylvania. I'm proud to say that I'm attempting to pass those pastimes down to my children. However, despite my continued involvement in hunting and fishing in Ohio, the overall involvement is steadily decreasing.

The term pay our own way is used a lot to justify these proposed license increases. The issue I see with that is as the overall population of outdoor enthusiasts continues to decline, at some point those of us who do enjoy hunting and fishing will not be able to shoulder the ever-increasing burden. Increasing the out of state fees by nearly \$100 for both youth and adults can only lead to decreased utilization by out of state hunters. My father and I used to hunt both in Ohio and Pennsylvania when I was young, but we ceased doing that when Pennsylvania raised their out of state fees to a level that no longer made the trip reasonable. I fear that Ohio may face the same issue if nonresident fees are increased. Targeting youth hunters must be a priority to ensure the continued support of those hunters as the mature and have children of their own. My son recently completed his hunter's safety course and there was a total of 3 people in the class. I think that underscores the lack of new participants in Ohio's game and fish activities.

I can attest first hand that an easy way to raise revenue is to increase the fees in my office. However, I can also tell you that simply raising fees is only a short-term gain and leads to a loss of established patients. However, when I focus on retention and bringing new patients into my practice, the results on long term growth and revenue is remarkable. If we do not focus on the underlying problem of underutilization, simply raising fees will only exacerbate the problem. Existing sportsman will feel disenfranchised and increased cost barriers will be placed in front of new sportsman. I believe the better course is to forgo the Band-Aid of fee increases and attempt to treat the underlying problem: retaining existing sportsmen and increasing the participation of new sportsmen.

Thank you again Chairman Jordan and member of the committee for providing me the opportunity to speak before you.