

Greater Ohio Showmen's Association
P.O. Box 43
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December 9, 2020

Senate Bill 375
Proponent testimony
House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

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Chairman Koehler, Vice Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Brent and all members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide supportive comments on Senate Bill 375 on behalf of the Greater Ohio Showmen's Association. The GOSA is a group of over 400 members across the state of Ohio who represent the Outdoor Amusement Industry. Our membership is comprised of individuals, families and small businesses that own and operate the various rides, games and food concessions you find at local fairs and events across our state.

Early in the pandemic, the health orders and closures picked winners and losers. I am sorry to say, the members of the GOSA were the losers. We were so pleased to hear the debate last week in this committee and the acknowledgement that our businesses have suffered greatly. To our members this is a livelihood and a family endeavor. The closure and cancellations of fairs and festivals have left us rudderless and without a means to make a meaningful living. Some food concessions were able to operate in a limited fashion at some county fairs and some were able to be creative in finding other ways to generate income. But it pales in comparison to a "normal" year.

There is no reason our members couldn't adhere to the safety protocols of other similar businesses. However, under the Department of Health orders rides and games were prohibited from operating at county fairs. This pulled the rug out for under us, as our contracts and operation schedules are planned far in advance. We appreciated and support the concept proposed in this committee that a task force be created to develop protocols for the 2021 season right away. This year that guidance changed several times. We need predictability to plan for 2021. It is critical that the businesses who make fairs and festivals what they are have a seat at that table.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has left most of our members unable to operate and has created economic challenges we can't even begin to quantify, we remain optimistic that 2021 will allow us to return to normal and our members will be able to once again offer Ohioans fun and safe entertainment. SB 375 is an important piece to that mission. We ask for the legislature's favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Drake'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Drake, President