



May 29, 2019

The Honorable Rob McColley
Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce
One Capitol Square
Ground Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: SB 72 – Revise Fireworks Law

Dear Chairman McColley:

As President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), an organization representing more than 5,000 physician, resident and medical student members in Northern Ohio, I am writing on behalf of the organization and our members to voice our opposition to SB 72 – a bill that would legalize the discharge of consumer fireworks in Ohio. As an organization whose primary focus is advocacy on behalf of Ohio children, veterans, healthcare providers, and animals, we believe these efforts pose a serious risk to the health and safety of all Ohioans.

As you know, consumer grade fireworks can be sold in Ohio but cannot be discharged. Until recently, consumers who purchased fireworks were required to sign a form attesting that they would transport them out of state within 48 hours. While the form is no longer required, discharge of consumer fireworks in Ohio remains illegal. We strongly support the current prohibition on discharge and believe that it should be maintained.

While we understand that many Ohioans disregard the law prohibiting discharge of fireworks, especially around the Fourth of July, studies have consistently shown that legalization of fireworks discharge leads to increases in the frequency and severity of fireworks-related injuries. Data compiled by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission show that one-third of fireworks injuries are to children and nearly half of injuries are to innocent bystanders not involved in igniting a firework.

Simply stated, legalization of consumer fireworks discharge will lead to more injuries and more serious injuries. In addition, fireworks discharge poses additional risk to veterans who suffer from PTSD, animals and livestock who are easily frightened by noise, and damage resulting from fires started by negligent discharge of consumer fireworks.

We know that legalization of fireworks correlates with increases in fireworks-related injuries. A statewide prohibition sends a strong message that fireworks discharge is a dangerous activity and should be avoided. If Ohioans want to see fireworks and celebrate our nation's independence, they should do so at a professional display.

The AMCNO opposes this legislation. We know that legalization of fireworks correlates with increases in fireworks-related injuries and we ask that the committee consider our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mehrun K. Elyaderani". The signature is written in black ink and ends with a long horizontal flourish.

Mehrun K. Elyaderani, MD

AMCNO President