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**Prevent  
Blindness**

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*Representing Ohio's property/casualty  
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*Saving, protecting and enhancing children's lives*

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December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Robert McColley  
Chairman, Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee  
Ohio Senate  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman McColley and Members of the Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee—

On behalf of the organizations above, we are writing today to share our thoughts on Amended Substitute House Bill 253, which is currently pending in your committee. We appreciate the thoughtful consideration and meaningful changes that have been made to this legislation.

Historically, our organizations have opposed legalization of fireworks discharge in Ohio because of the simple premise that fireworks are inherently dangerous. However, after careful review of the substitute bill adopted last week by this committee, we can now say that we are neutral on the version of HB 253 pending before you. Those of you who have served for multiple terms in the General Assembly know how long the debate over fireworks has carried on and how elusive a compromise has been to date.

We are very appreciative of the thoughtfulness Senator Burke demonstrated in preparing his substitute bill and we understand the frustration that many legislators feel over this issue. Many of our members share that frustration and we are hopeful that the legislation you are considering today will head off future legislation on this subject. To be clear, we remain very concerned about fireworks discharge and would encourage local governments to use extreme caution and consult with fire and EMS experts as well as healthcare providers when deciding whether or not to allow discharge around the Fourth of July holiday.

As has been noted numerous times during testimony, the vast majority of states allow for discharge of consumer grade fireworks. It is important to note that almost all of these states have safeguards in place that limit the times of year when discharge can occur, the types of products that can be discharged, or the locations where discharge can occur. Further, many states provide robust options to local governments to regulate discharge. The current opt-in structure of HB 253 as well as the limits on time of discharge better align Ohio with other states while still promoting safety first.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and dedication to the health and safety of all Ohioans.

Submitted on behalf of—

*Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics*

*Prevent Blindness Ohio*

*Ohio Osteopathic Association*

*Ohio State Medical Association*

*Ohio Insurance Institute*

*Ohio Children's Hospital Association*

*Ohio Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians*