

Sen. Rob McColley, Chairman
Sen. Terry Johnson, Vice Chairman
Sen. Nickie Antonio, Ranking Minority Member

This is opponent testimony to one part of HB442

I am Keith Daniels, a resident of Senator McColly's district, a business owner, recently "retired" board member of the Ohio State Trappers Association, (OSTA) and a "certified" trapping instructor for the ODNR Division of Wildlife since the programs legislation required inception, which began in 1979.

The back story is, the issue that was on the ballot in 1977, commonly referred to as "Issue2" was an attempt to halt trapping in the state of Ohio, both as a professional management tool and as a recreational user opportunity, which doubles as part of a wildlife management strategy. A major argument used by the proponents of the issue was that trappers are uneducated, unethical and unkind. Part of the presentation to the public to fight this conception was the required development of a trapper education program, legislation was passed to create the requirement and give the sportsmen and wildlife managers a defense against that argument.

To give the program validity it obviously needs to be presented by people with knowledge and experience in the field, thus the requirement for a minimum of three years of trapping experience.

Fifteen of my years as an OSTA board member were spent as the Education Coordinator. During that time we, with the assistance and backing of the ODNR/ODOW began developing continuing education programs and opportunities, expanding outreach to new and aspiring trappers, and just as important, expanding outreach to the general public.

Following my time as Education Coordinator I served six years as the OSTA Vice President and just completed an eight year service as the OSTA President. During this time period not only was the outreach continued, but we also continued to support many different ODOW research projects and continually evolving standards for our tools of the trade, at some expense to us, and our methodology and message, so we can/will be more understood and accepted by the growing number of non-consumptive users. Quite honestly, it has been working very well for us, but we need to keep pushing forward, we can not let up or quit. A motto of mine I have lived by in both business and life is, there is no standing still, you are either moving forward or you are backing up.

HB442 is huge, what I want to see removed is simply lines 958 and 959. Early in the bill, lines 34 and 35 I see reference to occupational regulations. My understanding from talking to others is a big part of this is about equity in licensing, not holding license holders from other states to higher standards than their state requires. As a business man I understand reducing regulation and making commerce easier by doing this, it can be seen as an economic benefit to the state of Ohio and also to the business license holders.

The difference here is the trapper education instructors are neither licensed or any source of economic impact for the state of Ohio, they are simply volunteers that are certified, by the state of Ohio, to instruct the mandated trapper education course. There is no fee charged for the course and the instructor gets no economic stimulus of any kind for conducting the course. There is no incentive for anyone, from within Ohio or any other state to conduct a trapper education course, other than because of their own dedication and desire to see the sport/management tool continue to be accepted by the public, and enjoyed by the fur harvester for years to come.

We have dedicated many years, miles and hours to keep trappers in the favor of the public. As stated above, we have voluntarily made changes at our own expense to put us in a defensible position. We are in that position now, and removing the three year experience requirement would accomplish absolutely nothing positive, it would simply weaken our position and open us for the same attack that the requirement was put in place to thwart over four decades ago. Honestly, this amendment makes no sense to me at all, and as someone who has dedicated countless hours and effort for the betterment of trapping in Ohio, I can assure you I speak on behalf the vast majority of the trappers in Ohio, and the wildlife management professionals, when I say there is no need or benefit to this amendment, it can only be detrimental, please remove it.

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