

## 79<sup>TH</sup> HOUSE DISTRICT

PARTS OF CLARK COUNTY  
INCLUDING: SPRINGFIELD, NEW CARLISLE,  
SOUTH CHARLESTON, AND ENON

### COMMITTEES

CHAIR: AGRICULTURE & CONSERVATION  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



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## State Representative Kyle Koehler Ohio House of Representatives

Presiding Chairman Creech, Ranking Member Brent, and Members of the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, thank you for allowing me to give testimony on House Bill 507 – a bill that is so simple, it only changes one word in the Ohio Revised Code.

Last summer, I was approached by Sash Rittenhouse, former President of the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association and an active 4H leader in my district, and asked why 4H families were required to buy six turkey chicks each year when their child was only allowed to show one turkey at the fair. Besides an issue with raising all six turkeys and only showing the one, the critical issue for many 4H participants is finding someone to butcher all six turkeys.

As it turns out, since 1971, Ohio law has prohibited poultry younger than four weeks old to be sold, given away, or distributed in lots less than six. This law was brought about when chicks were still primarily shipped by mail – at that time, a lot of six was determined to be safest for the chicks. This is no longer the case.

This law is so outdated, it was passed with a provision to prohibit the practice of using artificial coloring to dye baby rabbits and chicks. **Therefore, with the support of the Ohio Poultry Association, HB 507 was created to modernize this ORC statute and allow chicks to be sold in lots of three.**

Over the weekend, I received this flyer from Rural King advertising the beginning of their spring chicks’ sale. As you can see, the flyer clearly states that chicks must be sold in lots of 6 when purchased in stores. It is these retailers – Tractor Supply, Rural King – that will be impacted by HB 507, with no impact on large poultry breeders or farms.

Many have asked why we don’t do away with the minimum requirement altogether. In short, for the purposes of tracking disease outbreaks among poultry flocks, the Ohio Poultry Association has been clear that a lot minimum of three is ideal for identifying the location of owners and quickly tracking possible contagion points.

Finally, like all other industries, Ohio’s meat processors have experienced major supply chain disruptions. Hobby farmers in my district were waiting months for available appointments to have their livestock harvested.

There are simply not enough meat processors to service demand, so much so that we approved a \$250,000 meat processing investment grant in the Operating Budget.

By decreasing the minimum purchase requirement for poultry chicks, we are hopeful consumers will be able to purchase the number of birds that is right for them and, consequently, provide relief to the already maxed out poultry processing industry.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to testify. I will now stand for questions.