

**Testimony of
Andrew Herf, Executive Director
Ohio Bar Owners Association
Before the Ohio House Commerce & Labor Committee
In opposition to HB 574
November 15, 2022**

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Andy Herf, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Bar Owners Association, representing bars and taverns in Ohio. On behalf of the businesses in our group, I am here to oppose HB 574.

House bill 574 is an unnecessary change because the activity that it seeks to allow, up to five times per year, is already allowed up to 24 times per year by simply obtaining a temporary permit. In other words, this problem has already been addressed in a reasonable and responsible way.

In much of the testimony offered, supporters of the bill describe a situation where a group held a small concert in a private residence and charged a fee to attend. The event was posted on facebook, noticed by city officials in Columbus and the gentleman was charged under the “keeper of the place” statute. At this point, I would like to acknowledge that I believe the intentions of the organizer were noble.

He was trying to help his friends during the shutdown. Both the Columbus Songwriters Association and the Columbus Music Commission sound like great organizations, and I hope they are able to help musicians find their audiences. However, I do not think that an isolated incident with an easy and existing solution merits a change to state law.

In the example above, the organizer of the event simply needed to get an F permit. More information on the F permit is attached, but the features are as follows:

- The cost is \$40 per event.
- An F permit may be issued up to two times per month.
- It must be filed 30 days before the event.
- Each “event” may last up to five days.
- The holder of a permit may purchase beer at the wholesale cost, and have it delivered by a wholesaler or manufacturer (this feature often offsets the cost of the permit).
- Exempt from Wet/Dry status of the precinct.
- There is no limitation on the size of the crowd.

By requiring a permit, the state ensures that the permit holder adheres to all of the other important liquor laws in Ohio, that my members follow every day. Had the gentleman known about the F permit and

obtained one, then promoting the event, charging at the door and selling the alcohol would have all been legal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, I happy to answer any questions.