

53rd House District

Butler County

Columbus Office

Vern Riffe Center

77 S. High Street

13th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111

(614) 644-5094

Rep53@ohiohouse.gov



Committees

Higher Education and Career
Readiness

Technology and Innovation
Vice Chair

Transportation and Public Safety

Ways and Means

**Thomas Hall
State Representative**

January 25, 2022

Good morning Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, and Ranking member Russo, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 457, an important piece of legislation that aims to address a “loophole” in current law.

On July 20th 2021, a tragic incident occurred in my district. 14 year-old Mykiara Jones was spending the day at a local water adventure park, at a man-made lake, when she went under water and tragically, never came back up. After life guards quickly began searching for her and local first responders arrived in minutes to assist in Mykiara’s rescue, she was quickly airlifted to Dayton Children’s Hospital, where she later passed away.

While, it is my understanding that a waiver was signed for her not to wear a life jacket while she was in the water that is certainly not what I am here to discuss.

The morning after the tragic incident, I received a call from our very own Director of the Butler County Health Department. After discussing what happened, she informed me of a “loophole” in Ohio law.

Currently, there is no oversight of these types of facilities by any regulatory body. HB 457 aims to correct this issue by allowing the Ohio Department of Health, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish licensing and safety requirements governing these commercial enterprises.

The ODH currently has oversight over Ohio's public swimming pools, spas, and special use pools. This oversight includes minimum standards, applicable throughout Ohio, for the design, installation, operation, and maintenance of these facilities in order to protect the public from injury, minimize the potential for disease transmission, and provide a safe and healthy aquatic recreational environment. It simply makes the most sense to update the Ohio Revised Code to include "commercial enterprises" that allow swimming or other aquatic activities on man-made ponds, lakes, or other similar bodies of water, to also be covered under ODH's scope of oversight.

This piece of legislation has just one goal, to provide some oversight to these commercial enterprises to ensure the safety of all Ohioans.

Thank you, again, Chairman Lipps and members of the House Health Committee for allowing me to testify today, I would be happy to answer any questions.