



The Honorable Brett Hillyer
Member, Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street, Floor 11
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Hillyer:

On behalf of the Premium Cigar Association and our affiliated Ohio Premium Cigar and Pipe Association, representing 49 Ohio small businesses, we are pleased to endorse H.B. 530, which would allow for cigar bars in Ohio. We commend and appreciate Representatives Dell'Aquila and Matthews for bringing the legislation forward.

H.B. 530 would provide an exemption from the state smoking ban for a narrowly defined class of small businesses that would meet the needs of those that wish to patron such business establishments. Across the country, states and localities are recognizing the need for such exemptions, given the niche clientele of those that wish to enjoy premium handmade cigars and adult-beverages.

In recent legislative sessions, Connecticut and North Dakota have enacted such bills, with both awarding (cigar bar) permits to a limited number of establishments. Over half of the nation allows for cigar bars (or allowing for premium cigar shops to have a liquor license) or grandfathered in such businesses when enacting smoking restrictions. There is similar pending legislation in New York and Maryland.

When enacting such legislation there is no threat to public health, and the enjoyment of premium handmade cigars should not be equated with the issues associated with other tobacco products. Independent studies have noted the lack of any statistically relevant association with addiction, inhalation, or mortality [we would welcome the opportunity to submit the studies to the committee.]

Further, youth access is a non-issue with premium cigars, and such businesses will not proliferate on every street corner, as is often purported. Cigar bars cater to a discerning adult population and are often viewed as a compliment to the local business community, for locals and travelers, alike.

If the committee or patrons would like any assistance with recommendations or additional models for such legislation, we would welcome the opportunity to be of assistance. We appreciate the committee's consideration and support for H.B. 530.

Sincerely,
Glynn Loope, Director of State Advocacy

