

60th House District
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Township and Ostrander)

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Brian Lorenz
State Representative

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally and esteemed members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, Thank You for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 461.

We all know the devastating effects the pandemic had on small businesses and how difficult it has been for our economy to reemerge. As a small business owner myself, I am very familiar with the restrictions that were put in place and the overwhelming burdens that crippled many small businesses in our State. As a legislative body, I feel strongly that we work together to advocate for the least restrictive environment and allow for small businesses to thrive. Ohio's entrepreneurs are innovators, they are invested in moving us forward and provide unique goods and services that support and facilitate growth in our hometowns while contributing positively to our tax base.

HB 461 attempts to formalize a widely accepted practice occurring in shops and salons all across Ohio. HB 461 also dubbed as the "Sip and Shop Bill" creates the F-13 liquor permit category and addresses a situation that is inconsistently enforced throughout our State. This bill would create a vehicle for uniform compliance that will allow owners of retail establishments to offer alcoholic beverages to customers who are participating in themed sales events. These events are focused in proximity with occasions such as the holidays and the change in seasons, for the sake of wardrobe changes and gift giving.

The owner of the establishment will be required to apply for a temporary permit in advance of the particular event and present a suitable control plan to the authority having jurisdiction. Unlike a DORA, all beverages would need to be consumed on site.

As the author of one of the first DORA's (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area) in the State of Ohio, along with my former Councilmember, the Honorable Frank Bertone, I understand the significance and the approach of having an on premise consumption option, first and foremost, as an economic development tool. In fact, our Powell model has been consulted and duplicated by cities such as Delaware, Cincinnati and Dublin, to name a few. We found that by creating the DORA, these activities enhance spending and benefit all of the businesses in an area. The attempt of this bill is to mirror the philosophy of a DORA and should not be construed as a competition to surrounding establishments otherwise engaged in the sale of spirits and alcoholic beverages but rather, be viewed as a catalyst to enhance sales for all establishments in a given commercial area.

I would like to thank the committee for its time and am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Sincerely,

Brian Lorenz
State Representative
Ohio District 60