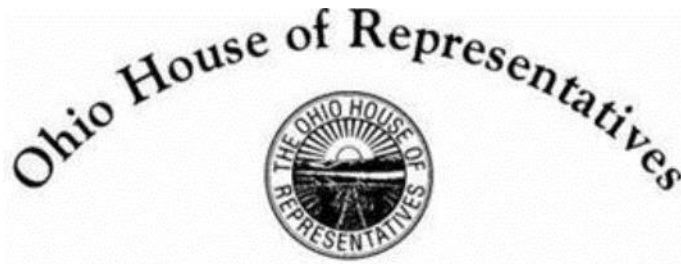


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**State Representative Darrell Kick**

Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 162

December 5, 2023

Chairman Schaffer, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing us to come before you today and present sponsor testimony on House Bill 162, which will recognize several federal agriculture days in state law.

There are about 75,000 farms in Ohio. Nearly 90 percent of those farms are run by families or individuals with roughly 2,000 of these farms registered as Ohio Historic Family Farms. Food and agriculture together constitute the state's largest industry, contributing more than \$105 billion annually to the state's economy and providing jobs to one in seven Ohioans. Ohio ranks first nationally in the production of swiss cheese, second in egg production and third in tomatoes and pumpkins. Ohio is fifth in the nation in bell pepper yield, sixth in sweet corn and cucumbers and eighth in the number of chickens sold.

With such a large agricultural community, organizations such as 4-H that help to encourage and support our farming families are critical to the industries continued success. 4-H organizations across Ohio not only play a large role in agriculture, but also provide support, lessons, and a sense of community to a vast portion of our states youth by teaching leadership, ingenuity, and community service lessons that help build our strongest future leaders. Currently, there are 130,859 4-H youth in Ohio, 17,273 Ohio 4-H adult and teen volunteers, and 139,000 4-H projects and programs were completed in 2022-2023.

As a sixth generation farmer, I have lived my entire life in and around the agricultural community and have had the opportunity to be a proud FFA member for many years. I have witnessed firsthand the opportunities and learning experiences that members of this organization, and those like it, are able to have and their lasting impact. Farmers work hard every day to provide the products that we all rely on without seeking recognition for their efforts. This legislation provides an opportunity to finally give these individuals the thanks that they deserve.

Agriculture is a vital part of our state and we look forward to the opportunity to humbly recognize the hard work of Ohio's dedicated farmers. I thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony and respectfully ask for your support of this legislation. We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell D. Kick".

Darrell Kick  
State Representative  
98<sup>th</sup> House District