



State Senator
PAULA HICKS-HUDSON

Serving Ohio's 11th State Senate District

Senate Government Oversight Committee

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Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson

Senate Bill 203 Sponsor Testimony

Good morning Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Antani, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony for Senate Bill 203. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this legislation and how it will bring aid and relief to small business owners.

This legislation grew from concerns that food truck owners in my district brought to my attention. From these business owners, I learned that in certain parts of Ohio, operators of mobile food businesses are often required to obtain a fire inspection and certificate for every jurisdiction in which they plan to operate. This is because there is no centralized requirement for inspections in state law. The state fire code contains safety rules for these type of units. However, it does not create a central authority. Rather, the fire code permits each local jurisdiction to create their own permitting plans for fire safety on mobile food units.

This procedure means that these small business owners who want to operate in different municipalities next to each other, maybe within the same county, are likely to be burdened with inspections and fees for the various municipalities. My constituents have asked why this is the case? Why do they need to undergo the same inspection for fire when the county department of health inspection makes them able to operate county wide? By passing S.B. 203, we will create a more succinct process that brings fire safety inspections for these vehicles more in line with the health safety inspections they also undergo.

By making this change, Ohio will save business owners money and time they can use to focus on operating and improving their businesses. A single inspection can cost up to \$100 or more, each year, multiplied by the number of vehicles a business has operating, these individuals can end up paying out hundreds of dollars, per vehicle, every year. Also consider that the time dedicated to undergoing multiple inspections, which are substantially similar, prevents businesses from actually conducting business.

S.B. 203 is the common-sense approach to eliminating the red tape and redundancy faced by mobile food vendors. It will ensure that only one inspection and permit are needed to stand as proof of compliance with the Ohio Fire Code, statewide. This bill is good for Ohio's small business owners. Thank you for listening to my testimony. I welcome any questions.