



Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance Testimony to the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee

May 6, 2025

Chair Miller, Vice Chair Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells and Members of the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's 24,821 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 564,000 restaurant and foodservice workers, the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance (ORHA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony today on the importance of travel and tourism and of Ohio's vibrant restaurants and hospitality businesses to our Buckeye State.

When visitors come to our state or travel within our state, the dollars they spend contribute greatly to our state's economy and vibrancy, the enjoyment they get from spending time in every corner of our amazing state puts Ohio positively front and center as not just a place to visit, but also as a place to live and do business, and the jobs provided by all of the businesses in Ohio's travel and tourism sector contribute to a healthy and growing economy and workforce.

Here are some numbers on the impact of the restaurant and hospitality industry here in Ohio:

- 24,821 locations employ 564,100 Ohioans, offering first jobs to so many and amazing careers in nearly every imaginable field.
- As every dollar spent in Ohio restaurants contributes \$2.15 to the state economy, our \$33.1 billion in direct sales leads to a \$71 billion-dollar economic impact.
- 9 in 10 are small businesses and the overwhelming majority are locally owned, including local franchises of many major national brands.
- See our attached one-pager for more details on Ohio's hospitality impact.

And beyond the numbers, Ohio's restaurants and hospitality businesses are a crucial part of travel, tourism, and vibrancy in our state. Let's think about some of the places you may visit here in The Heart of It All. Maybe you're in Columbus visiting for a conference and enjoy the view and a meal at the Junto or an Ohio



brewed beer at Seventh Son. Or you're in Cleveland visiting the Rock Hall and enjoy dinner and a show at Pickwick and Frolic. You're in Cincinnati for a Reds game and have some awesome ribs at Montgomery Inn. You're in Toledo for the Mud Hens and you enjoy the iconic Tony Packo's (and maybe run into Corporal Klinger). You're in Youngstown enjoying some awesome Italian at the new Casa di Canzonetta. You're in Dayton visiting the Air Force Museum and check out Wheat Penny in the Oregon District.

Maybe you're taking a weekend getaway in one of Ohio's awesome smaller communities and you check out The Syndicate in Bellefontaine, the South Street Grille in Ashland, the Der Dutchman in Sugarcreek, Mr. Spots in Bowling Green, or grab a pint at the Baltimore Pint House. You enjoy Ohio's historic charm at the storied Golden Lamb in Lebanon, the Spread Eagle Tavern in Hanoverton, or the 100+ year-old Bender's in Canton; you're island hopping the Lake Erie Shores and check out the Boardwalk on Put-in-Bay, or you enjoy an Ohio wine at the Green Eagle Winery in Cortland.

Whether you're enjoying one of these places or the thousands of other amazing Ohio spots they represent, know that you are in good company with locals who love their hometowns and travelers from far and wide enjoying all that we have referenced today that supports so much we value about Ohio's vibrancy. Ohio's restaurants are truly integral to what makes Ohio such a great place to visit, work, live, and raise a family. I say it over and over, but it is so true - Thriving Hospitality truly does equal Vibrant Communities

Tod Bowen
Managing Director of External Affairs and Government Relations
Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance