My name is Macie Hamilton, and I am writing as a cottage home baker, parent, and small business owner serving families in Andover, Ohio, and across Ashtabula County. I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 134 before the Ohio General Assembly.

In rural communities like ours, access to fresh, locally made food is not always easy. Many families live far from specialty bakeries or small food businesses. As a home baker, I have seen firsthand how much my community values being able to purchase homemade goods from someone nearby and trusted. What may seem like a small convenience in larger cities can make a real difference in rural areas.

For me, baking from home is not just a hobby — it is a way to help support my family while also serving my neighbors. Like many parents, I am balancing raising my children with trying to build something meaningful and sustainable. Current restrictions make it difficult for small home-based food businesses to grow in a way that fully meets the needs of our communities.

House Bill 134 would open the door for responsible home kitchen operations while still maintaining important food safety oversight. This balanced approach matters deeply in rural counties like Ashtabula, where small-scale, local food options help fill gaps that larger commercial operations often do not.

This bill would allow people like me to:

- Provide more fresh, locally made food options to rural families
- Keep food dollars circulating within small communities
- Build small businesses without the immediate burden of commercial kitchen costs
- Continue serving our neighbors in a safe and transparent way

In Andover and throughout Ashtabula County, small home-based businesses are part of the backbone of our local economy. HB 134 recognizes that reality and gives families like mine a fair opportunity to grow while still prioritizing consumer protection.

This legislation is about more than business. It would be extremely beneficial to mothers trying to contribute to their households, rural families seeking better access to local foods, and communities that thrive when small entrepreneurs are given room to succeed.

Thank you for your time and for considering the real impact this bill will have on rural Ohio families. I respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 134.

Sincerely,
Macie Hamilton
Andover, Ohio