

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide Sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 247 today.

I'll try to keep this brief. Now I know this is not the most serious bill we'll debate on this session. But sometimes it's good to take a break from all the heavy stuff going on and do something that will not only remind us of all of what we love about this state but also bring people some joy. For Ohioans few things say "home" quite like a buckeye.

You may notice right in front of you is the buckeye candy itself. A delicious confection consisting of rich peanut butter dipped in smooth chocolate made to resemble the nut from our state tree. Unlike the real buckeyes which should never be eaten, the candy version is sweeter, safer to eat, and has become a long-lasting beloved tradition for generations of families all over Ohio.

Go anywhere and you'll find them in bakeries, grocery stores, candy shops, and even kitchens made from scratch. Families pass down their favorite recipes. Parents teach their kids how to roll the peanut butter balls right before dipping in chocolate. It's not only a tradition but creates a sense of connection and memories that will be cherished for a lifetime. And of course, no Ohio State tailgate is complete without a plate of buckeyes on the table. It's something we all share, from Cincinnati to Columbus to Cleveland, and everywhere in between.

This idea actually came from my legislative aide, Ashley, who recently began working for me. She's the one who first noticed that it was not the state candy, so when she asked about introducing legislation to change it, I said of course, why not.

I'll also say this, as someone who represents The Ohio State University, I'd sure love to see to see this bill pass before the end of football season. That way we can celebrate making the buckeye our official state candy and then give that team up north their just desserts.

At the end of the day, this bill is all about pride, tradition, and sweetness. It is about celebrating something uniquely Ohio, something that reminds us where we come from and what we share.

I respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 247. Let's make it official and give Ohioans one more reason to smile. Thank you.