

HOUSE BILL 47
HOUSE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

JACK HEEKIN, OWNER/FOUNDER CININNATI & COLUMBUS PEDAL WAGON
PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Jack Heekin. I am the owner and founder of the Cincinnati and Columbus Pedal Wagon Companies. I am here today to testify as a proponent to House Bill 47.

First, I would like to provide you with an introduction to my business and me. After graduating from Miami University and the Ohio State University, my business partner and I returned to our hometown, Cincinnati, and began our careers in entry-level corporate positions. We both wanted to pursue our dream of becoming business owners and do so in Cincinnati. In 2012, after witnessing the entrepreneurial spirit that was fueling the Over-the-Rhine community's rejuvenation, we purchased our first vehicle and founded the Cincinnati Pedal Wagon.

A Pedal Wagon is 15-passenger commercial quadricycle, completely controlled and operated by a driver and powered by stationary passengers equipped with cycle pedals. Similarly to the spirit of this legislation, our goal is to connect Cincinnatians and visitors with the small businesses that make our community unique. We offer a variety of tours that include corporate team building events, bridal parties, pub tours, progressive dinners and historic tours. We also host tours specifically routed for passengers who plan to attend Reds or Bengals games.

Today, almost three years later, we operate four pedal wagons in Cincinnati and two in Columbus; to operate, we employ three full-time and eleven part time workers.

As a business, the largest hurdle we face is the fact that our passengers are not permitted to have an open container while on board. Last year we worked with the Common Sense Initiative (CSI) to address this problem. CSI facilitated the crafting of language to allow for a beer and wine open container exemption. We are now working with Rep. Blessing to include this language in H.B 47. Our industry may be new to the Ohio, but Indiana, Tennessee, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas have all enacted a similar exemption. Industry operators in jurisdictions that have made such a change have seen increases in patronage of up to 60%. Allowing our patrons to safely consume an adult beverage will further our continued efforts to grow our business and the other small businesses that make our community unique.

The inclusion of such an amendment will cement our support of this important bill, and we ask for your favorable consideration.

At this time I am happy to respond to questions from members of the committee. Thank you.