

HB 253 – Proponent Testimony

On behalf of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild (OPAG)

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chairman Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the committee, I am Bruce Blom, co-~~founder~~founder, and past president of the Ohio Pyrotechnic Arts Guild – OPAG. I am also Vice President – Communications for the Pyrotechnics Guild International (PGI). I have a PhD in chemistry and have been actively involved with professional and amateur fireworks since the early 1980s. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 253.

OPAG, the group I represent in the matter of HB 253, is an educational and fraternal association of Ohio licensed exhibitors and licensed assistants, founded in 1997. While we are supportive of wider sale and use of 1.4g fireworks by the public, we wish to emphasize that we are not in the business of selling 1.4g or 1.3g (display) fireworks. We are consumers of these products in that we provide our expertise to licensed firms to conduct displays on their behalf. We also purchase these products from Ohio-licensed sources for our use at OPAG events.

This committee will hear much testimony, pro and con, focused on the sale to, and use by the public, of 1.4g (consumer) fireworks. You'll hear, from others, about injuries caused by misuse of fireworks. Only education and greater familiarity with fireworks can combat potential injuries. And, you'll hear that injuries have declined as consumption of fireworks has increased.

You'll hear about animals, usually dogs, being frightened by fireworks. As a long-time dog owner, I can tell you that thunderstorms and gunfire often elicit the same response.

You'll hear testimony about the effects of fireworks, and presumably other similar noises, on people suffering with PTSD. On the other hand, and there is always another side, we've conducted large displays at a VA hospital.

Finally, the current moratorium, that has strangled this industry for 20+ years, causing a major impediment to free trade, competition, and product development, to the detriment of consumers and other interested parties. HB 253, if enacted, will put an end to this egregious situation. OPAG remains optimistic that, if passed, the proposed Study Group will have the opportunity to review and discuss other parts of the current law that need attention.

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