



June 3, 2020

The Honorable Gayle Manning
Chair
House Commerce and Labor Committee
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

HB 253 – Fireworks Legalization and Regulation

Dear Chairman Manning:

As President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), an organization representing more than 5,000 physician, resident and medical student members in Northern Ohio, I am writing on behalf of the organization and our members to voice our opposition to HB 253 – a bill that would legalize the discharge of consumer grade fireworks, including bottle rockets, firecrackers and missiles with only minimal safety restrictions in place. As an organization whose primary focus is advocacy on behalf of Ohio children, veterans, healthcare providers, and animals, we believe these efforts pose a serious risk to the health and safety of all Ohioans.

While we understand that many Ohioans disregard the law prohibiting discharge of fireworks, especially around the Fourth of July, studies have consistently shown that legalization of fireworks discharge leads to increases in the frequency and severity of fireworks-related injuries. Data compiled by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission show that one-third of fireworks injuries are to children and nearly half of injuries are to innocent bystanders not involved in igniting a firework.

Simply stated, legalization of consumer fireworks discharge will lead to more injuries and more serious injuries. In addition, fireworks discharge poses additional risk to veterans who suffer from PTSD, animals and livestock who are easily frightened by noise, and damage resulting from fires started by negligent discharge of consumer fireworks.

We know that legalization of fireworks correlates with increases in fireworks-related injuries. A statewide prohibition sends a strong message that fireworks discharge is a dangerous activity and should be avoided. If Ohioans want to see fireworks and celebrate our nation's independence, they should do so at a professional display.

The AMCNO opposes this legislation. We know that legalization of fireworks correlates with increases in fireworks-related injuries and we ask that the committee consider our concerns.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Collins, MD, FACEP, FAEMS
President
The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio

Cc: Members of House Commerce and Labor Committee