

**Jodi Seminsky**

Written-only Opponent Testimony

House Bill 253

June 2, 2020

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee: I write in strong opposition to House Bill 253 and Senate Bill 72, legislation which would legalize consumer discharge of 1.4g fireworks. I write as a cautionary voice on the dangers of fireworks and of human error. Before you vote to approve House Bill 253, please consider what message doing so will send; consider what additional risk of harm to body and property you are sanctioning.

In 1998, my daughter, Lacey Seminsky, died at the age of 12 when a fireworks rack tipped over at the time it launched. It shot through the crowd and struck my daughter in her head. We were 420 feet away from the display. Even when handled by professionals, fireworks can malfunction or misfire.

Last July, a 61-year-old Toledo man died when a fireworks display he was putting on for his neighbors tipped over and struck him in the chest. A few months prior, a 12-year-old boy in Oxford, Ohio, found a fireworks device and lit it off thinking it would provide a bit of fun; instead, the boy had one hand amputated and suffered damage to his eyesight. In 2016, a fire captain who had spent 25 years rescuing and helping others suddenly found himself in need of aid when his final few fireworks of the night launched into his face and nearly cost him his eyesight.

These are just a few examples of how fireworks have functioned unpredictably or fallen into the hands of ill-prepared individuals. Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, members of the committee: thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective on fireworks and to tell the story of my daughter, Lacey, and people like her who have suffered from fireworks. Ohio's fireworks laws have undoubtedly saved lives; to remove them will put adults, children, and property at unnecessary risk. I ask you to bear that in mind as you consider how you will vote on House Bill 253.