



HB 253 Opponent Testimony to the House Commerce & Labor Committee

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Dean, and Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan:

I am writing today on behalf the osteopathic physicians and students of the Ohio Osteopathic Association to express opposition to House Bill 253, which would effectively allow for private use of fireworks.

The Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA) represents approximately 5,000 actively practicing osteopathic physicians (DOs) in the state of Ohio and more than 1,000 osteopathic medical students. DOs represent about 1 in 6 of the total physicians practicing in Ohio and more than a quarter of the state's family physicians. Osteopathic physicians approach wellness through a comprehensive approach that recognizes the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.

HB 253--much like SB 72--appears to be an attempt by the fireworks industry to legalize discharge of fireworks in Ohio, as there's no apparent organic groundswell of support of legalization from citizen groups.

HB 253 eliminates the requirement that purchasers of consumer grade fireworks must transport those fireworks out of the state within 48 hours and allows purchasers to keep fireworks in Ohio. The bill allows any person authorized to possess consumer grade fireworks to discharge, ignite, or explode those fireworks on the person's own property or with the property owner's permission.

Physicians--especially those in emergency rooms throughout Ohio--would see an immediate increase in visits caused by recreational and reckless fireworks discharge. Time and time again, studies show that both the frequency and severity of fireworks injuries increase when discharge is legalized in a state.

Most importantly, it is Ohio children who are most directly impacted by the potential passage of this bill, as one-third of all injuries are to kids. Further, half of all fireworks injuries are to bystanders.

The OOA strongly urges your help in securing a safe environment for Ohio citizens by removing the discharge legalization from HB 253. Thank you to the House Commerce & Labor Committee for its consideration.

Matt Harney, MBA
Executive Director
Ohio Osteopathic Association