

TESTIMONY OF Anthony Anselmo, Concerned Citizen
HB 172 —Fireworks Legalization and Regulation
April 21, 2021

Dear Distinguished Senators and Representatives,

For the discussion today I would like to point you to some of my favorite movies. The first one is Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. Now for those of you who haven't seen the movie, I'll give you a short synopsis and spoiler alerts here. The Enterprise, is caught in a difficult situation where Mr. Spock risks his life to save the crew, escaping them for immediate danger. As he is dying the reason for his logic is 'The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one.'

However, what happens in the third movie? In the third movie, the Enterprise crew risk their lives, their ship and their careers to find a way to bring Spock back from the dead. When Spock now asks Kirk why he did this, he says 'Because the needs of the one, outweigh the needs of the many.'

So how does this relate to modern day. Well for the past year our Governors and Leaders across the world have asked us to sacrifice for the sake of saving the 'ones.' They have asked us to stay home, flatten the curve, wear a mask and more - all to help protect those who are vulnerable. While most individuals who would get the coronavirus would survive the goal here was to protect the few, the 'ones.' Begrudgingly most Ohioans are willing to do this. They're willing to inconvenience themselves for the sake of a better future. I will admit that even though I have reservations about the coronavirus, I am taking the high road. So in the scenario we are willing to be the better people for the few.

This should be viewed as a good thing!

Yet every year around July 4th, it seems Ohioans get very selfish. They also illogically feel that they can safely set off combustibles within the confines of our ever constricting suburbia environments without causing harm to people, places or things. To continue the movie analogy, it's as if the major of Ohioans suddenly turn into Khan and must display their intelligence...sorry I meant 'freedom' with large big colorful torpedoes that go 'boom.'

Do these individuals know of the amount of damage that is caused to wildlife each year? Do they know how many people including children lose an eye, or are burned? Have they seen the numerous houses burned down to the ground? More so, do they realize how much strain they put on our essential workers during this time year. No they don't because this bad behavior is encouraged by companies who would rather gain profit from the suffering than actually protect Ohioans.

Imagine if someone came into these senate halls today and said ‘Hey I want to sell some Covid19 to people because it's fun and it would make us money. Can you imagine the revenue with tax dollars?’ What would you do? The answer is simple, you would deny that person the ability because the health and safety of your constituents should be above all financial concerns. Because you see, my distinguished members of the General Assembly , you are the playing the role of Kirk. You have the choice of whether to protect us, or allow us to undergo further harm. Except instead of the Enterprise you are flying the great ship of Ohio.

To give you an example of these few, I am one of them. I suffer from extreme anxiety which makes the July 4th timeframe a maddening hell for me. I also have several parrots as pets who can easily die suddenly, from a heart attack if they are frightened. Do you know what it's like having to be that guy who has to attempt to politely tell his neighbors to stop every year, only to then have it turn into an unnecessary argument or possible confrontation. I shouldn't have to deal with this. Someone's right to explode things should not infringe on my ability to survive. Fireworks infringe on my life, liberty and pursuit of happiness because they are uncontrollable.

This could all be avoided if Ohioans were encouraged to be respectful of everyone, just as we did for the coronavirus. To continue the movie analogy, what happened in the fourth movie? The crew of Enterprise travels back in time and realizes how prehistoric humans almost destroyed their world by the ignorance. Well for this analogy allow me to play Spock and be the fore warner of our destruction, if we do not stop the course of this bill. Granted we are not killing Whales here, but even worse we are hurting people.

So I conclude this cosmic adventure asking you to vote down Senate Bill 113 and HB 172. In fact, I am asking you to draft new legislation to help curb fireworks use and provide more penalties to those who dare put us in danger. If we can do this for a virus, we can do it for combustibles.

Lastly, to end the analogy, Spock's Father asked Kirk why he risked his life, his ship and his career. He replied, “If I had not tried, the cost would have been my soul.” I'm asking you to not lose your soul, and stand up to the Wrath of Fireworks. We don't need any more sequels in this series. We need Ohioans to be safe and the ‘needs of the one, outweigh the needs of the many.’

Live long, and prosper.

Sincerely,
Anthony S. Anselmo
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