



**House Bill 272
Written Proponent Testimony
House Commerce & Labor Committee
June 9, 2021**

Chair Stein, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 272, legislation that protect consumers and businesses by providing transparency in the online marketplace.

By way of background, as President of the Ohio Grocers Association I proudly represent over 500 food retail, wholesale, and supply companies across the Buckeye state. My members range from the largest chain stores to the smallest “mom and pop” independent grocers as well as some convenience stores and of course the food wholesalers who supply these stores.

Grocery store owners deal with a variety of complex issues and challenges on a day-to-day basis. Loss prevention and mitigating shrinkage is a continual problem that impacts our store’s bottom lines. Criminals use stolen items from our stores to further enhance their multi-billion-dollar organized retail crime enterprises by pushing our merchandise through online marketplaces. The pandemic has only heightened this problem as customer shopping habits have shifted to more online use. We believe HB272 is a prudent step in addressing this problem and one that ultimately protects consumers.

This legislation would require online marketplaces to verify basic information that any reputable business readily provides and, in most cases, is already collected by online marketplaces. This would boost the reputation of legitimate sellers by removing bad actors and ensures that small businesses are not forced to compete against criminals. HB 272 would go a long way in giving all Ohioans assurances that the products they are purchasing via online marketplaces are legitimate.

House Bill 272 is an important step providing transparency in the marketplace and has the full support of the Ohio Grocers Association. We urge your favorable consideration.

