



June 9, 2021

Dear Chairman Stein,

We write today to express Meijer's support for House Bill 272, which would increase transparency and accountability for online marketplaces and protect Ohio consumers and businesses by addressing the growing number of counterfeit and stolen goods sold online.

Ohio is home to 46 Meijer supercenters including our two newest locations in Boardman and Seven Hills, our growing Meijer distribution facility in Tipp City, and over 12,000 Meijer team members. Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, Meijer was already experiencing an increase in customers utilizing our e-commerce platforms for services such as grocery home delivery and curbside pickup. Over the course of the pandemic, e-commerce has grown exponentially for Meijer and many other retailers, making it safer and more convenient for our customers to shop.

Unfortunately, there is a dark side to e-commerce that is becoming all too common across the country. Stolen goods – often taken from job creating, tax paying brick-and-mortar retailers – and counterfeit items are more widely available than ever to customers through online marketplaces that are not held accountable for verifying the identity or authenticity of their sellers. Counterfeit items are a safety risk to consumers, and stolen items victimize businesses big and small, as goods are stolen and then often sold through online marketplaces for a fraction of the retail prices.

We support House Bill 272 because we believe that the seller disclosure and verification requirements within the legislation inform and protect Ohio consumers and businesses and give law enforcement officials the tools that they need to put an end to these fraudulent sales. At the same time, this legislation allows law-abiding sellers to continue running their legitimate businesses through online marketplaces, while giving consumers the peace of mind that comes with knowing that the seller and product are authentic.

Ohioans should be able to shop online with confidence that the products they purchase are safe and legally acquired. There should be no safe harbors for bad actors, and online marketplaces should be held accountable for the products they sell – just as brick-and-mortar retailers stand behind the products that they sell in their stores.

We ask for your support for House Bill 272 and thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Andrew Martin
Government Affairs, Meijer

cc: Paul Jaeckle
Vice President – Asset Protection, Meijer

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