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Senate Bill 113 Written Proponent Testimony
Eric Turner, American Promotional Events
317-417-1177
eturner@t3investments.com

Chairman Stein, Vice-Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 113. My name is Eric Turner and I want to applaud Representatives Baldrige and O'Brien and Senators Johnson and Rulli for their efforts to bring this much needed reform to Ohio's fireworks laws.

Our company, American Promotional Events, Inc. (sold under the TNT Fireworks name,) celebrated 100 years selling fireworks this last year. Our company offers a wide variety of products to our more than 40,000 retail customers across the United States. We have one TNT Fireworks Supercenter in Dayton, but primarily work with over 1,400 retail partners in Ohio. In Ohio, our sales have been limited to handheld sparklers and novelty items that are currently the only fireworks permissible for sale by Chain Retailers and Mom & Pop stores.

As you know, Senate Bill 113 will finally allow Ohioans to celebrate the 4th of July with fireworks and without breaking the law. The bill also brings Ohio in-line with the vast majority of other states that allow for ground sparklers to be sold in retail stores. Ground-based Sparklers or Fountains are nonexplosive and non-aerial devices that emit a shower of sparks. These fountains are often sold with hand-held sparklers and novelty items in an assortment pack. However, under current Ohio law, these devices are only available where fireworks are sold.

Our company ships the assortments with the fountains to every state except Ohio, Illinois, Vermont and Massachusetts. With the passage of this bill, our Ohio retailers, including Wal*Mart, Target, Meijer, Sam's, Costco and Kroger, among many others, will have the opportunity to sell these products to Ohio consumers for their own family 4th of July celebrations.

Our retail partners welcome this proposed change as an exciting new offering to their customers. They have agreed that to sell these new devices, the store must be licensed by the State Fire Marshal, collect a 4% tax on the sale of the fountains and must adhere to the National Fire Protection Association Code 1124. Furthermore, these fountains are only to be sold in fixed retail stores and only to those 18 years old or older. Just as my company believes in the utmost importance of safety, our retail partners are committed to ensuring these new items will be sold in a safe and responsible manner.

I want to thank Representatives Baldrige and O'Brien as well as Senators Rulli and Johnson for their efforts on this issue. I also want to thank others in the fireworks industry. Although we compete against one another in the marketplace, we have been able to come together and reach a compromise with the legislation now in front of your Committee. Senate Bill 113 will benefit retailers in Ohio, while also allowing Ohio citizens to enjoy the celebration of our freedom, in a safe and enjoyable way.