



Testimony to the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Gaming
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Chair Schuring, Vice-Chair Manning and members of the Senate Select Committee on Gaming, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on our businesses, how we operate in the gaming space today and how we envision the sports gaming industry aligning with our businesses.

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 stores and other retail food establishments are highly regulated. Customers expect a safe and secure environment every time they enter one of our member’s stores. This fact has only been amplified over the past twelve months with our response to the coronavirus pandemic. Whether a customer is picking up a prescription, a bottle of wine, a lottery ticket, or shopping for groceries, there is a certain level of expectation in terms of service and safety that they anticipate, and our stores work to provide. It’s that high service standard that I believe sets us apart.

Many of our members are proud to partner with the state and offer lottery at their locations. In fact, as of 2020, over six hundred grocery store locations engaged as lottery retail agents and handled over \$313 million wagers over the course of that year. As outlined above, grocery stores have continued to demonstrate our ability to handle the transparency, security, and risk components. These are by and large Ohio based businesses, employing Ohioans. If the state legalizes sports gaming, Ohio grocery stores, as committed and proven partners of the state lottery, would appreciate the ability to provide this new offering to Ohioans living in all areas of the state.

We recognize there are a lot of different concepts and proposals on how sports gaming will function and be structured in Ohio. To that end, we are not here today to advocate for opening a sports book in each grocery store or having tables set up through our locations, but we ask you to consider making us a part of the sports gaming system. The grocery store model works because it's a uniquely crafted and regulated one. Customers come into our stores for several different reasons, but they expect a consistently safe and secure experience.

Appreciating mobile gaming will no doubt consume the lion's share of the market, we are asking for an inclusive approach that will allow other businesses in Ohio, including grocery stores, to provide a sports betting product as part of an expanded lottery offering.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to provide our comments on this issue. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

