

**Leawood Gardens Neighborhood Association and  
the Mid-East Area Commission (MAC)**

**.....In opposition to HB 172.**

- ❖ First of all, why does the announcement on these Hearings get sent out with only about a 24-hour advance notice? Instead of say, maybe a week, or maybe even 3 days advance notice? The answer, at least to me, is pretty obvious; somebody hopes that we might not even show up at these Hearings. ....Well, I'm sorry to disappoint.
- ❖ Why are we “legalizing” 120-150 decibel EXPLOSIONS from fireworks---that often occur without warning to next door neighbors mere feet away---fireworks that do way more to DISRUPT our holidays than they do to ENHANCE our holidays?
- ❖ From a 2020 interview and according to **American Academy of Audiology** President Catherine Palmer,
- ❖ Being within a few yards of firecrackers exposes your hearing to between 130 and 150 db of sound — that’s equivalent to a plane’s jet engine.
- ❖ What Palmer calls “acoustic trauma” from firecrackers or firearms, for example, can cause immediate hearing loss, to say nothing of tinnitus and other auditory injuries.

- ❖ All of these holidays we're talking about have been celebrated for literally decades upon decades---and NOW all of a sudden we need to legalize fireworks to make the holidays more enjoyable???? Whose enjoyment are we talking about here---the people who have little regard for safety and who quite obviously have little to no consideration for their neighbors? Why not try to keep the holidays enjoyable for everyone---instead of for just the few??
  
- ❖ Are we “legalizing” fireworks in the State of Ohio simply because we collectively are not smart enough to figure out any other way? Is that what this is all about?
  
- ❖ As densely populated as many of our neighborhoods are with homes only 10 feet apart, when even one resident sets off fireworks in his or her backyard, the impact---auditory, psychological, and as just a plain annoyance---affects literally dozens of nearby residents (including the safety thereof) who have no control or recourse whatsoever over this practice. Why are we not emphasizing an “Opt-in” clause (which would take into consideration the different demographics and proximities of dwellings) instead of an “opt-out” approach, which is much harder to reverse?

- ❖ To say that setting off fireworks will henceforth be “legal” only on such & such days is simply ludicrous. It’s like telling your pet Schnauzer they can lie on the couch only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. You can imagine how well that’s going to work, right? ---Well, it won’t.
- ❖ This bill simply encourages this unsafe and reckless habit on several days of the year (and everything in between); and we all found out during the “pandemic summer of 2020” just how un-enforceable the existing “**fireworks are ILLEGAL in the State of Ohio**” law was. Would anyone disagree that it has long been virtually IMPOSSIBLE to enforce? Let’s bring in the enforcement aspect of this, please.
- ❖ Nothing against a severely short-staffed Columbus Police Dept., but I know firsthand that a typical response from their call center is “We’ll send someone out as soon as we can”. And for a call on fireworks, that’s just about as low a priority call as it gets ---TRANSLATION: “We’ll be out in about 2-4 hours, if we make it there at all.” Again, why do most of us out here have NO RECOURSE whatsoever against the onslaught of fireworks?
- ❖ Why are we legalizing fireworks for the few, when the negative impact and injurious, destructive consequences affect so many others nearby who are: neutral on the subject; do not partake in this practice; and/or are adamantly opposed to this form of “entertainment”?

- ❖ Possibly, even in this age of pervasive gunshots in our very neighborhoods and noise pollution throughout our cities, one could still make a case for fireworks around the **4<sup>th</sup> of July** as a long-standing American “tradition” (and many say that has even become ridiculous at this point); but what pray tell do fireworks have to do with Labor Day or Memorial Day or Cinco de Mayo or Juneteenth???
- ❖ Maybe we should legalize fireworks for the Easter holiday and for Thanksgiving and for Valentine’s Day as well??
- ❖ Why after all these years where it has been “illegal” in the state of Ohio and fireworks have been ubiquitous ALREADY---especially, especially since the “pandemic summer of 2020”, why are we now making it “legal” on several holidays that traditionally have had little to nothing to do with fireworks, so that we as a state are now actively encouraging this practice far & wide, virtually all year long?

- ❖ If the point is made (as Senator Thomas did at the Hearing on SB 113 on June 1, 2021) that the states all around us have made fireworks “legal” and that it doesn’t make sense for the state of Ohio to **“lose all that revenue...”**
- ❖ For one, it’s questionable that Ohio currently loses that much (if any) revenue in the first place; retailers of fireworks abound throughout Ohio. For years and years, Ohioans have known quite well that they do not have to cross state lines to purchase fireworks. Or set them off. (The “waiver” they currently sign has long been a well understood “joke”...wink, wink).
- ❖ As far as fireworks “not being a significant problem” throughout the rest of the nation (as Senator Thomas also alluded to), then what does it mean when 10,000 people in the United States per year (on average) visit the emergency room from injuries due directly to fireworks? And most of these injuries are from legal fireworks! Is that not a significant problem in itself? Do we just accept that that many people will be injured each year due to fireworks?? .....Instead of Ohio being a “follower” of these dangerous & asinine trends, why doesn’t the State of Ohio position itself as a leader in safety and common sense, just as Gov. DeWine has tried to do with his recent veto?

- ❖ Why, when there is virtually no one (except for representatives of the pyrotechnics industry) generally present to testify in favor of fireworks----and there are always a significant number of people from all walks of life and professions testifying against fireworks (or at least the unrestrained legality of fireworks), why does the testimony of the latter groups seem to be totally dismissed and ignored?
- ❖ So, with passage of this bill making fireworks “legal”, you are saying you actually want MORE of the chaos, MORE complaints, MORE injuries (injuries to eyes, ears, and body), and yes, even MORE deaths than what we experienced in the last two years since the Pandemic began?
- ❖ Why can we not slow this legislative process down instead of trying to ram it through (What’s the hurry anyway? ..... Profit over the well-being of your constituents, perhaps?)
- ❖ Why can we not at least begin a conversation about “**silent fireworks**” (yes, that’s a real thing; and if that’s a new term, you can Google it) ----**Silent fireworks**, that would still bring people pleasure with the visual effects, and be beneficial for commerce, but keep the decibel level to a minimum----just as some European municipalities have legislated?

\*\*\*