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Chairwoman Roegner, Ranking member Leland, members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House bill 223. My name is Joe Rosato and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Ohio Restaurant Association.

The Ohio Restaurant Association was founded in 1920 and is the leading trade association for the food service industry in Ohio. The association works to represent, educate and promote the rapidly growing food service industry in Ohio.

The purpose of my testimony today is to urge you to not support HB 233, a bill that would allow concealed handguns into bars and restaurants. I represent an organization that is part of the 90% of Americans who oppose allowing guns in bars and restaurants where alcohol is served.

Under current Ohio law, a concealed handgun license holder is prohibited from carrying his or her concealed handgun into an establishment licensed to dispense alcoholic beverages.

This makes good sense. We know that guns and alcohol do not mix. There is strong evidence that alcohol increases a person's likelihood of violent aggressive behavior – the type of behavior that can be a deadly when a gun is involved.

We think it is a good idea for it to be against the law for a person to be carrying a handgun in public while they are intoxicated. Yet, we should not be, at the exact same time, encouraging such behavior by allow concealed handguns into bars.

The research about the dangers of guns and alcohol is well-established - consuming alcohol leads to impaired judgement about whether to shoot a gun and it inhibits the cognitive function associated with risk taking. Why then would we want to make it easier for people to have hidden, loaded guns in places where alcohol is served?

Simply put, we should not be making it easier for people to carry concealed handguns around alcohol. Guns do not belong in bars and restaurants. For all of these reasons, I respectfully ask that you oppose this bill. Thank you.

Joe Rosato
Director of Government Affairs