State Senator William P. Coley II
Senate Bill 182 Sponsor Testimony
Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
September 12, 2017

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about Senate Bill 182.

Senate Bill 182 would allow restaurant and bar owners in the state of Ohio to welcome dogs on their outdoor patios. It recently came to my attention that, according to the Ohio Administrative Code, animals are not allowed in outdoor seating areas of restaurants, with an exception for service dogs. Local health departments have corresponded with restaurant owners to reinforce this rule.

Since receiving that correspondence, many food-service business owners have expressed their desire to allow or continue to allow dogs on their patios. This legislation would abolish the statewide restriction on dogs on patios, empowering business owners to make rules that fit their business models and creating an environment where they can thrive. I have heard first hand from restaurant owners across the state that would like to explore this option. Additionally, patrons can decide for themselves, using their hard-earned money, whether they want to eat at a restaurant where dogs are permitted on the patio.

Clean and sanitary is clean and sanitary. Nothing in this bill relieves a restaurant from the obligation to be clean and sanitary. This bill just acknowledges the reality that the mere presence of a dog does not mean a restaurant is not clean and sanitary.

Ohio is not the only state addressing this issue. Many other states are already welcoming dog-friendly food establishments and others are moving towards this favorable policy.

Senate Bill 182 moves Ohio forward and gives power back to small business owners and consumers in our state.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you for your time and consideration and would be happy to answer any questions.