

**Ohio Statehouse**

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Local Government, Public Safety,
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Education
Rules & Reference
Ways and Means
Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education

Cecil Thomas

State Senator
9th District

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

From: Senator Cecil Thomas

Subject: Sponsor Testimony – Senate Bill 233

Date: December 12, 2017

Good afternoon Chair Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 233 which seeks to “allow a cottage food production operator to use a firebrick oven located on a patio at the operator's residence for purposes of the cottage food production operation.”

The idea for this bill came from two small business owners in my district, Charole and Tia, who bake some of the most delicious breads I have ever tasted right out of their home. They are well-known in their community via word of mouth, largely due to their use of freshly-ground wheat. As food trends continue to move towards healthier eating habits, they want to bake artisan breads to supply their customers' demands.

In order to do so at a rate that is pragmatic to their business goals, they would like to build a firebrick oven outdoors on their property. However, this is where the issue arises in Chapter 3715 of the Ohio Revised Code. Currently, “home” means “the primary residence occupied by the residence's owner, on the condition that the residence contains only one stove or oven used for cooking, which may be a double oven, designed for common residence usage and not for commercial usage, and that the stove or oven be operated in an ordinary kitchen within the residence.”

This legislation seeks to allow “one firebrick oven that is used for cooking and is located on a patio appurtenant to the primary residence” as an alternative option. Now, I may not know a lot about baking artisanal bread, let alone running a bread baking business, but it is my belief that we should continue to work on increasing opportunities for our small businesses to thrive and excel as our markets change.

With that being said, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 233. At this time, I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.