Testimony of Charolett Phoenix and Tia Watson, February 27, 2018

Proponents Testimony of Senate Bill 233

Health Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Ohio Senate

Good afternoon, my name is Charolett Phoenix and this is my friend and business associate, Tia Watson.

Thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 233 which seeks to “allow a cottage food production operator to use an outdoor stand-alone firebrick oven located at operator’s residence for purpose of cottage food production operation.”

Tia has been a resident of Ohio for 26 years and I have been here my entire life. We both have families with a total of 8 children between us and we have been successful home educators of over 20 years. We are now embarking on starting Cottage Based Bread Baking Business in each of our homes. However, we have found that Ohio Cottage Law, at present, is not conducive to producing freshly baked loaves of bread in order to sustain a bread business.

**Ohio Cottage Food Law Amendment for Outdoor Stand-Alone Wood Fire Brick Oven Usage**

According to the Ohio Cottage Food Law, a residential oven within a home kitchen is the only oven to be used for baking acceptable non-potentially hazardous food products for sale. Due to the challenge of operating a Cottage Based Bread Business using only a residential oven within the home kitchen, we are requesting that an amendment be made to the Ohio Cottage Food Law permitting the use of an outdoor stand-alone wood fire brick oven on the premises of the home to accommodate a Cottage Based Bread Business. Although inclusive of bread as an acceptable cottage product, the Ohio Cottage Food Law does not adequately accommodate a Cottage Based Bread Business that requires the means to bake larger, and at times awkward in shape, different varieties of bread, such as Artisan Breads. Bread is a product that is more space and time costly than the other acceptable allowed baked products such as cookies, candies, and cupcakes. A residential kitchen oven can hold 4 baking sheets of cookies with a yield of 48 cookies within 10 minutes; however, a residential oven can only hold 6 average size loaves of bread with a bake time of 35 to 60 minutes, which equals 144 cookies per 30 minutes as opposed to 6 loaves of bread in 30 minutes. As you can see the oven restriction severely limits the number of loaves that can be produced by any Cottage Based Bread Business.

**Benefits**

The benefits of this amendment to the Ohio Cottage Food Law is that it will increase the productivity and opportunity for success and growth without excessive overhead costs for Cottage Based Bread Businesses. It will also open opportunities to make same day fresh baked bread available to communities throughout Ohio.

**Logistics**

The size of the stand-alone wood fire brick oven (internal dimensions) will need be at 3’X 4’. External dimensions would vary according to external design**.**We are requesting that the oven be located on the premises of the residence.

**Fire Safety**

As per our local fire department for Hamilton County, an outdoor stand-alone wood fire brick must have a chimney stack with a chicken wire cap, and a closing door to contain flames.

Thank you again, for your time and consideration, of our need for proposed changes to Bill 233.