

Lara Rittenhouse

Youth Exhibitor at the Clark County Fair

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent, and Members of the House Agriculture Committee- Thank You for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 507.

My name is Lara Rittenhouse, I am from Clark County and have been involved with 4H and FFA for the past 7 years. I attend Global Impact STEM Academy in Springfield where I am an active FFA member I am also a member of the Northwestern Livestock Boosters 4H club where I currently am the President of our club. On my family farm we raise cattle, goats, turkeys, ducks and chickens.

In the last 2 years we have seen dramatic changes in poultry production and processing. In Ohio, we were already limited on the number of poultry processing facilities. I am from Clark County and the processor that is closest to us made changes to their processing procedures that severely impacted many of my fellow 4H and FFA members. The processor implemented a policy that they would only process turkeys from October through April. While there are a few other options around the state for poultry processing, these other facilities are either very hard to secure appointments with or they do not offer the level of processing that most desire.

This change left fair Exhibitors and their families in difficult positions. Exhibitors were required to purchase a minimum of 6 turkeys; however, they were only allowed to take 1 turkey to the fair for exhibition. Leaving the remaining turkeys with no destination. In the past Exhibitors would take their extra turkeys to the poultry processor and either sell the processed birds to their friends and neighbors or keep them for their own family's consumption.

I am happy to report that there has been some work to alleviate this issue, and kids are allowed to go together and purchase their turkeys, and there is hope of new poultry processing facilities opening up to meet some of the need. But I fully support the change that House Bill 507 offers by reducing the number of birds that must be purchased together from 6 down to 3. This will be another way to help alleviate the stress of trying to find end points for the extra turkeys after the fair.

In closing, I would like to thank the Ohio House Agricultural committee for your leadership on House Bill 507 and helping our 4H and FFA youth across the state have an even better experience with their projects.

Thank You and I will gladly answer any questions you may have.