



Ohio Restaurant Association Testimony in Support of H.B. 46

March 10, 2021

Chair Stein, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's 23,000 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 585,000 restaurant and foodservice employees, the Ohio Restaurant Association appreciates the opportunity to support H.B. 46 and thanks Representatives Miller and Carruthers for sponsoring this legislation.

Nearly one year removed from the onset of the pandemic and the resulting restrictions on Ohio's hospitality businesses, many are just now beginning the path to recovery. While there is more hope amongst Ohio's hospitality community than at any time since the pandemic began, for many sectors the path back is long and there is no certainty that all of Ohio's restaurants, bars, breweries and other hospitality businesses will survive.

One of the sectors that faced the most enduring restrictions and faces one of the longest roads back is on-premises liquor permit holders. We appreciate all that the legislature has done to help these businesses, including the bar and restaurant grant program authorized and administered at the end of 2020. Additional relief will make a difference for these deeply impacted businesses which still do not have full use of their liquor permits, as they continue to operate under the Dine Safe Ohio capacity limitations.

And in relation to the provision in this legislation regarding the use of gift cards more fully for on-premises consumption, this is a timely fix to a restriction that was put in place well before the advent of craft breweries, local distillers and other such local establishments that have since become so important to their communities. This fix will be meaningful to those establishments, especially coming off of a long, restricted winter where some customers bought gift cards proactively to help their community's establishments survive. Giving them the flexibility to fully use that gift card for both on-premises and off-premises consumption is timely and important. Thank you for considering this fix in this legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this timely legislation and for all you are doing to help Ohio and Ohio's businesses on this important road to recovery.

Tod Bowen
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Ohio Restaurant Association