

December 9, 2021

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, Members of the Government Oversight Committee

My name is Alex Hague and along with my family I am a Owner of Vandalia Range and Armory (VRA), Victory Range and Armory (VRA), and Evolve Range Solutions (ERS) located in Dayton, Ohio. I join you today to urge you to support House Bill 297, a bill to push back on big corporate discrimination against the lawful firearm industry in Ohio. Both VRA locations are indoor shooting facilities, and retailers. Evolve Range Solutions is a range manufacturer specializing in range builds, and digitally projected live fire shooting systems. Both of our facilities are NSSF Five Star Ranges, and we take great pride in our businesses. VRA has been in business in Ohio since 2006, and ERS since 2018. We currently employ approximately 40 part time and full-time employees amongst our three businesses.

We are proud to be able to serve Ohioans that wish to exercise their Second Amendment rights, but our ability to do so is threatened regularly by big companies that increasingly deny us fair access to important products and services.

Over the years we have seen our industry discriminated and regulated in many ways. These regulations have and do affect our abilities to do business in the state of Ohio, as well as, out of state. We want to have the same abilities to advertise, bank, and provide financing to our customers like any other retailer.

We are unable to advertise on platforms such as Facebook, Google, Instagram, Snapchat, and twitter. The purchasing of advertising on these platforms is often denied due to “content”, and in most cases, we are looking to promote classes, training, and safety products to our customers.

Being a retailer in the firearms industry means that we not only support the 2nd Amendment, but we also want the public to be trained, safe, and comfortable with their firearms. Unlike the unjust stereotypes that are portrayed onto us we do very much care about our customers, and their ability to protect themselves legally, and safely.

Advertising isn't the only concern for us. We also see issues banking and financing projects (for us and others). In many cases our customers are subject to deal with such a small number of financial institutions that their interest rates, and terms are borderline criminal. Allowing banks and lenders to compete for our business (as they do in other industries) will provide competition, fair pricing, and reasonable rates. Our customers should be able to purchase an item or fund a project with the same confidence as purchasing a house, car, or home goods.

VRA and ERS are both companies of integrity, loyalty, and compassion. We are aware of how the firearms industry may be portrayed in the eyes of others, but we are a family owned business

that has cooperated with all licensing, procedures, and requirements brought forth to us from our State and Federal Governments.

ERS not only helps others build first class facilities, but we have also invested our time and dollars into providing our EV-Secure® gun display cabinets. These cabinets can display firearms safely, but also give the retailer the ability to close the doors and lock up every single firearm on display. This is another example of how we invest our time and efforts to make sure that firearms are safely secured, and protected from those who should not, or cannot possess them.

In short, we want the same abilities to advertise, bank, and finance our business the same as other industries can. These regulations, and discriminatory actions hinder our ability to grow, expand, and invest within our communities. In some cases, being denied financing leads to safety concerns for a business, or a missed opportunity to provide a first-class facility to communities who need firearm safety, and training.

Those who devote their time, and energy to this industry are citizens of great morality. They want to invest their hard-earned capital back into the community while also providing a place for law abiding citizens to exercise their 2nd Amendment rights legally, and safely. Indoor facilities such as VRA play a vital role in education, and safety. I believe our community is safer, and better prepared than those without a high tier facility.

Our business is heavily regulated by federal, state, and local laws. We are a law-abiding business that serves law-abiding Americans. We just want to be treated fairly and with House Bill 297, the state of Ohio can help.

I'm happy to answer any questions.

Alex Hague : Owner

Vandalia Range and Armory

Victory Range and Armory

Evolve Range Solutions