

First, I am not an auctioneer. I am a bidder. I live in Louisiana but I have been attending Ohio auctions as well as Auctions in all states for 30 years. An online auction in Ohio is no longer limited to the citizens of Ohio. Thanks to the internet, an auction in Ohio is now available to consumers in every state, including my state in Louisiana. Thankfully in Louisiana a law was passed that requires for online auctions to also be conducted by Licensed Auctioneers January 2021. For centuries auctions were always live, so there was no need to have laws written to cover anything other than live auctions. That all changed with the internet. Thousands of people noticed this flaw in the auction laws and they began to exploit it to their benefit. It was a problem before Covid hit our economy, but it became a MAJOR problem when Covid started. Online auctions shot through the roof because people couldn't go to a live event so the attendance grew at a tremendous rate for online auctions. People noticed this trend, saw which states did not require an auctioneer's license to conduct online auctions, set up shop in those states, and started racking in millions almost overnight! There is nothing wrong with having a successful business, but there are reasons why it is required to have a license to operate certain companies, and there are no exceptions in the auction industry. Would it be ok to sale liquor without a license if you sold it online? Of course not! Auctions are simple, if a bidding process is taking place thru any type of sale, (Other than the reasons in the bill regarding charities or schools), must require a licensed auctioneer! It does not matter if the bidding process is live, online, by Phone, Sealed Bid, or by smoke signals. If a bidding process is taking place by anyone or company in the state of Ohio then that person must be required to have an auctioneer's license. Even if the auctioneer or auction company in Ohio is auctioning items located in another state. The items location does not matter. It only matters the state in which the auction is being conducted from.

Why should online auctions be conducted by licensed auctioneers? In the auction industry there are MANY laws, rules, regulations, and ethics. It is not as simple as placing an item on a shelf, setting a price for that item, and selling that item like all retail store do. No one is saying you can't sale your own property, or anyone else property, if that is what you want to do then just do that. If you choose to have a bidding process take place in any form then that becomes an auction. Licensed auctioneers have to spend a lot of time to get their license, take an apprenticeship, learn all of the laws and ethics, and then it can still take years to become a successful auctioneer. The requirement of being a licensed auctioneer is not so the state can get more money. It is merely to protect the consumer, make sure that whomever is conducting a bidding process knows all of the laws, and a way to hold those accountable that do not abide by those laws. If a licensed auctioneer does not abide by the laws, that auctioneer can get fined, have their license suspended, and even have their license revoked. This is a useful tool to help keep the auctions and the bidding process compliant with the laws because NO licensed auctioneer wants to have their license taken away and lose their ability to provide for their families. If someone is acting as an auctioneer and conducts an online auction, and that person does not abide by the auction laws, that person faces nothing. They have nothing to fear because they have NO LICENSE that can be suspended or taken away. Plus they do not have to spend the money and time to take the proper classes to get licensed and go through an apprenticeship and learn the laws and ethics. By not requiring online auctions to be conducted by licensed auctioneers you are incentivizing people to skip the license process and everything else it takes to become a licensed auctioneer because all they have to do is make their auction an online auction and they get all of the benefits by being a licensed auctioneer without actually being a licensed auctioneer, and on top of that they do not have any of the fears that a licensed auctioneer has of losing their license if they do something wrong because they have no license to take!

Licensed auctioneers have to put in a lot of hard work, receive lots of education, and years to get the privilege of receiving certain benefits of being a licensed auctioneer. Such as: A licensed auctioneer makes their money thru buyer's premiums and sellers premiums. Everything they auction off is sold as is where is with no warranty. Guess what, the people pretending to be auctioneers by conducting online auctions also take a buyer's premium and a sellers premium, and they get to sell their items as is where is, they get ALL of the benefits of being a licensed auctioneer without actually being a licensed auctioneer and NONE of the regulations because right now they are not required to be licensed. Can I sale real estate online without having to be a licensed real estate agent and get all of the benefits a real estate agents gets without anyone of the regulations? Of course not!

The only people that will really oppose this bill are the ones that have interest in an online auction business. They can argue as much as they want saying how this will ruin their company and a certain amount of people will be out of work by passing this bill. All of that is not true. If they have a retail business then all they have to do is set a price on their item and sale it like every other company does. If they have built a online auction business up and they want to keep that online auction going then all they have to do is either hire a licensed auctioneer to be a part of their staff to be responsible for making sure all of their auctions are compliant, or whomever owns that online auction business can simply go put in the time and money it takes to learn

everything and get their own license. This bill is not putting anyone out of business. They do not want this because then they become regulated and if they do something wrong they can potentially lose their license, and it's just so much easier to not have to follow rules and regulations.

This bill protects the consumer and the auction industry! There is a thing in the auction industry called shill Bidding. It is the practice of having a fake bidder driving up the price. Licensed auctioneers know what this is and they stay away from it in fear of losing their license. But again an online auction does not have to abide by this and has no fear of losing any license. Example: There is a very large online only auction company in Ohio (I will not give names unless asked to do so), most of this companies auctions are done with items they own, they will buy out an entire stores merchandise or equipment cheap because that company is going out of business, they will list all of the items on their online auction website, they will create themselves a bidders account, they will then use that bidders account to drive up the bids on every item going thru the auction forcing people to raise their bids and pay more than they would have if not for the company doing this, if the online auction company using the fake bidder account does not get outbid by another bidder, all they have to do is re-list the item in the next auction and post something saying that the winning bidder didn't pick up this item so that's why you are seeing it again in this auction. If the auction Company did not own the item being auctioned and they did that then they would simply tell the seller the winning bidder did not pay or pick up the item. Again, a licensed auctioneer has more to fear by doing this because they can lose their license, but the online only auction business has nothing to fear so why would they not do this if it makes them more money. So, let me get this straight, I can either sale my item in a normal store front or online store with a set price of \$100 and give some sort of warranty or return policy, or I can sale that same item in an online auction for \$95, then charge a buyer's premium of 15%, then taxes, and I don't have to give any warranties or have a return policy, so I can make more money doing that without any returns or warranties just because it's an online auction, and I don't have to get a license, I don't have to fear any regulations because I have no license for you to take, now do you see?

Please protect the auction industry and above that the consumer, not only in the state of Ohio but in all other States now due to the internet. The first step is passing this bill. I have over 30 years of experience in this industry as a consumer/bidder. I have a lot of knowledge and experience in this industry in almost every state. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call me. Thank you very much.

Thomas Williams
318-205-4874