



Ohio Restaurant Association Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 338

May 31, 2022

Chair Schaffer, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources 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 (ORA) appreciates the opportunity to support Senate Bill 338 and thanks Senator Lang for sponsoring this legislation.

Ohio's restaurant community and our association work closely with the 113 local health departments throughout our state on ensuring the safety of food prepared and served in Ohio restaurants. We appreciate the work of both the leaders of these local health departments and the front line registered environmental health inspectors, more commonly referred to as local health inspectors, who are tasked with actually going to restaurants and evaluating their compliance with Ohio's food code. The goal of both inspectors and operators is that the food being served and the conditions in which it is being served are safe for Ohio's consumers. Now more than ever, inspectors and operators are working together well to make this goal a reality.

We believe there are three primary components to a strong food safety track record:

- 1- Commitment to food safety - owner/operators who know that their first job as a foodservice operator is to serve safe food in sanitary conditions.
- 2- Training – owners, operators, and managers who are well trained in food safety and sanitation and who make sure their staff who work with food are also well trained.
- 3- Health inspectors who share this commitment, are well trained, and see their role as helping operators meet this goal of safely and effectively serving their customers.

It is necessary that there is a process by which health inspectors have the opportunity and responsibility to demonstrate their knowledge of food safety and Ohio's food code. The Ohio Departments of Health and Agriculture respectively maintaining oversight is appropriate. We believe strongly and appreciate that the process proposed in S.B. 338 of establishing a written or electronic assessment and administering such a test at appropriate intervals is the best method of evaluating inspectors' knowledge. This process will allow foodservice owners, operators, managers, and staff to continue to focus on serving safe food in sanitary conditions, and health inspectors to focus on helping them do so.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this timely legislation and for all you are doing to help Ohio restaurants safely and robustly contribute to a strong economy and thriving, vibrant communities throughout our great state.

Tod Bowen

Managing Director of External Affairs and Government Relations
Ohio Restaurant Association