

9/19/19

PA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RE: HOUSE BILL 1687

Dear Representatives,

Please accept this letter as my plea to further amend HB 1687. First I would like to thank you for working to amend this bill. I have read through it to the best of my ability and would like to add my personal thoughts, please consider this my personal testimony.

I live in beautiful Haycock Township in Upper Bucks County, my husband and I have a small horse farm. Since the fireworks law was changed our summer weekends have become firework shows from all directions. Some associated with parties and events, some just because. We never know what the weekend will bring.

New Year's Eve 2018/2019, at around 530pm I was in a stall with one of our horses tying up a hay bag for her when the neighbor across the street decided to begin his 7 hours of random fireworks. The mare and I were both startled and she spun as she does every time he shoots. This put me in a very dangerous situation with a scared 1200 pound horse. Fortunately I was able to leave the stall safely. Over the summer our horses stay indoors during the heat (and bugs) of the day, they stay out overnight in the comfort of the dark. Multiple times this summer soon after going outside for the night fireworks have started, again startling them enough to make them run wildly. My fear is one of them running into a fence or gate in their pasture and injuring themselves.

Therefore, I do not understand why regular folk need to have access to carnival style fireworks. Do we really need to take away from local municipalities that put a show on professionally and safely? My children now in their 20s grew up happy with sparklers, stinky smoke bombs and the typical drum of fireworks from Walmart, and then we packed them up and took them to the nearest town to watch the professionals on a blanket under the stars with the rest of the community.

My husband is the business manager of our local Catholic Church and School. After a professional fireworks display in August held as part of our local fire companies carnival, a water mark was noticed on a ceiling tile in the elementary school, further investigation found firework casings on the roof. It had burned a hole through the roof and water damage marked the ceiling tile INSIDE of the building. My husband had the fire marshal come out who then sent pictures to the fireworks company who paid for a roofer to come out and fix the roof. So even under professional conditions things can happen! And we all know that many consumer fireworks are being fired by people under the influence. Anyone thinking that isn't happening is fooling themselves.

In reading over this bill, if the original law is not repealed, I have a few suggestions: A one o'clock am stop time is absurd. Most towns start around 930 pm and are over between 10 and 10:30 pm, if this bill must be, can it at least follow that rule? How about 11 pm and its lights out. The only exception of course is New Year's Eve.

I think requiring a bond or permit to shoot fireworks is a waste. Have you ever lived in a community that requires permits to hold garage sales?? No one gets them, no one enforces them and people hold their sales outside of the required dates and times. If someone is diligent enough to get the bond, they are probably someone who is doing this for the first and only time for a special occasion and actually researched the process and is most likely acting responsibly!

Please reconsider safe distances, the current 150 feet from an occupied structure is much too close. Please consider barns, garages, and animal pastures in your distances.

I plead with all of you to reconsider this bill. Pennsylvanians don't need to be shooting professional grade fireworks. I can't believe revenue from taxes collected is more important than the life of even one individual or animal, or the heartache of losing a home, barn or school. Please do right with this and completely repeal the original bill or place very stringent rules on the new bill.

Thank you for your time,

Respectfully submitted,

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