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December 10, 2021

The Honorable Dan Moul
Chair
House Committee on Agricultural & Rural Affairs
416 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202091
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2091

The Honorable Eddie Day Pashinski
Democratic Chair
House Committee on Agricultural & Rural Affairs
214 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202121
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2121

The Honorable Elder A. Vogel Jr.
Chair
Senate Committee on Agricultural & Rural Affairs
362 Main Capitol
Senate Box 203047
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3047

The Honorable Judith L. Schwank
Minority Chair
457 Main Capitol
Senate Box 203011
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3011

Written Testimony for December 15, 2021 Joint Hearing on Fireworks Laws

Dear Chairs Moul and Vogel, Democratic Chair Pashinski, and Minority Chair Schwank:

As you may be aware, in October 2020, Philadelphia City Council unanimously passed regulations limiting the use of consumer fireworks within City limits. The law makes it illegal to set off fireworks after 9 p.m., except on federal holidays, and also clarifies that all fireworks must adhere to the City's Fire Code. This legislation was in direct response to numerous complaints from residents about the increased use of fireworks that coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Unfortunately, this local ordinance has been difficult to enforce, and that is in large part due to ambiguity caused by the state-level legislation passed in 2017 that allows residents to legally purchase and use more powerful fireworks. In Philadelphia, since consumer fireworks became legal for use and purchase under state law, residents have been consistently reporting that the use of fireworks in their neighborhoods has negatively impacted their quality of life. From a public safety perspective, fireworks can be difficult to distinguish from gunfire, making it difficult for law enforcement and the public to accurately assess a potentially dangerous situation.

As a former state representative who traveled extensively around the state, I understand that in some more rural parts of the state, fireworks may not be a nuisance to neighbors. However, in a City as densely populated as Philadelphia, fireworks can, and almost always do, disturb neighbors, whether they be humans or pets.

My request is simple: please repeal the legislation that allows residents to legally purchase and use more powerful fireworks. In my opinion, legislation that gives some localities more control over the sale and use of fireworks is only a half measure. As Philadelphia's experience has proven, if they can be legally purchased anywhere, they will be used in the City and used illegally.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please reach out to Rachel Meadows in my office at Rachel.Meadows@phila.gov. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cherelle L. Parker".

Cherelle L. Parker
Councilperson – 9th District
Majority Leader