



November 1, 2021

The Honorable Brian Baldridge
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Representative Baldridge:

We join as 4 Ohio Safe Kids coalitions and Safe Kids Worldwide in support of your bill HB 304, which would protect Ohio residents and families by updating the state fire code to require the installation of tamper-resistant sealed smoke alarms in residential buildings.

Smoke alarms are an essential component in any effective fire escape plan. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 3 out of 5 fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.¹ Further, 25% of fires occur in homes where smoke alarms were present but did not operate because of dead batteries.² Having working smoke alarms in place can reduce the chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50 percent.³

In 2019, an NFPA analysis found Ohio residents are 1.2 times more likely than the national average to die in a fire.⁴ To put this in perspective, an average of 137 Ohio residents died in fires per year from 2013-2017. This works out to a rate of 11.8 annual fire deaths per million population, more than 16% above than the national average.⁵

Safe Kids is a grassroots network of more than 400 coalitions across the country dedicated to preventing unintentional injuries among kids 19 and under, the number one killer of children in the United States. We work on a range of risk areas including car crashes, poisoning, drowning and fire safety hazards. We thank you for your leadership in introducing HB 304 and stand ready to support you and its passage.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids Ohio
Safe Kids Fairfield County, OH
Safe Kids Mahoning Valley, OH

Safe Kids Summit County, OH
Safe Kids Worldwide

Contact: Shane Simenstad, ssimenstad@safekids.org, 202.292.3234

¹ National Fire Protection Association. (2018). *Smoke Alarms at Home*. Available at: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/FPW/Safety-tip-sheets/FPW19SmokeAlarms.ashx>

² National Fire Protection Association. (January 2019). *Smoke Alarms in U.S. Home Fires*. Available at: <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Detection-and-Signaling/Smoke-Alarms-in-US-Home-Fires>

³ Safe Kids Worldwide. *Fire Safety*. Available at: https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/fire

⁴ National Center for Health Statistics & U.S. Census. (2017). *Relative Risk of Dying in a Fire By State Bureau*. Available at: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/fire_death_rates.html

⁵ National Fire Protection Association. (2019). *U.S. Fire Death Rates by State*. Available at: <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/US-Fire-Problem/Fire-deaths-by-state>