

Submitter: Daniella Benson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: SB643

To Whom It May Concern,

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you discovered a passion for something you've never know before? For me, that time came while I was stuck in a rocking chair for hours and hours each day with my third baby.

Needing something I could do from phone or tablet while sitting down, I dreamed of finally starting that baking business I hadn't had the opportunity to build up before. And one of my biggest hurdles, at the time, was narrowing down exactly what I wanted to focus my business on. After many years of experimenting and learning, I stumbled upon something that brought joy to my heart and soul. While sitting in that rocking chair, over many hours, I researched, I watched training videos, and I fell in love with a part of baking I had never know before. I knew it was what I've been waiting for and I couldn't wait to start baking, designing and decorating, and open my new home baking business.

However, upon further research, I was saddened to learn that I could not obtain a domestic kitchen license. I had an elderly cat who had been with our family for over 10 years, and despite the fact that she can barely jump up on the couch, and would never be able to jump up on a chair or even the kitchen counter, animals are not allowed anywhere inside the same building as a licensed domestic kitchen. We could not give up this furry family member, nor would we ever consider it. It was a hard blow that my dreams of a licensed kitchen and selling my creations at farmers markets would not be a dream I could make into reality.

Thankfully, upon speaking with others in the area and calling my local inspector, I learned that I could still fulfill part of my dream by operating under the Cottage Food Laws. I would not be able to sell at most farmers markets, but I could still sell directly to the consumer. To an extent. I had to keep my sales under \$20,000 a year. Again, at least it was something, but it is also discouraging that I have to put a sales limit, and therefore a creative limit, on the business that I am trying to build. I understand that there are reasons for obtaining a domestic kitchen license when you are working with perishable foods that need proper handling. However, when working with shelf stable foods, I do not need to follow the same procedures with my finished products, and therefore don't necessarily need all the restrictions put upon by the domestic kitchen license. So, why can't I sell as much as my consumers demand? Why can't I, as an entrepreneur working out of my own home, help contribute more, monetarily, to my growing family? Create a home business without having to pay thousands of

dollars to rework my kitchen or rent or build a commercial kitchen space when what I currently have is exactly what I need to make and sell my products? As a mom of now four children, I don't have to opportunity to work anywhere but from home. I squeeze in this passion of mine during nap times and after bed. Nor would I want to take my work and go into a baking company to make money for someone else. Is it such a bad dream to want to bring beautiful creations to others, and not have to put a limit on it?

I strongly support measure SB643 as it would allow those of us with Cottage Food businesses to make at least a bit more each year. It would also put into written law that it is okay to have an animal in your home, just not in your kitchen when preparing food, evening for those with a domestic kitchen license. Why can't we, as a society, lift those up who are trying to achieve their dreams, instead of limit them? Please consider voting yes, and giving some of us a bit more room to keep building our dreams.