

## H.B. 27 – 2.15.23. – Economic Matters

### TESTIMONY

Thank you Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee. For the record my name is Delegate Mike Griffith, and I'm requesting a favorable report on *H.B. 27 – Commercial Law – Consumer Protection Act – Floral Wire Services*.

H.B. 27 is an important piece of legislation as it seeks to support local small floral businesses by requiring transparency from larger corporations as they conduct and partner in business.

In this way, H.B. 27 addresses the nefarious Floral Wire Services practices at play, which include:

- Advertisement: intentionally misleading consumers to believe they're buying direct from local florists or third-party sellers;
- Billing: supporting any consumers' request for refund without ensuring product payment to local florists or third-party sellers; and
- Market: monopolizing the market so local florists or third-party sellers are forced to use their services regardless of the nefarious practices employed.

To address these issues, H.B. 27 highlights several stipulations that Floral Wire Services shall follow in their business dealings and practices with local florists and third-party sellers statewide.

The stipulations state that Floral Wire Services shall

- (1) Adopt clear and concise billing practices;
- (2) Disclose to the consumer when Floral Wire Service is buying direct from a local florist;
- (3) Provide a method for submitting charge disputes; and
- (4) Make all payments to local florists or third-party sellers within 15 calendar days after the date of delivery of product.

Furthermore, H.B. 27 states that Floral Wire Services may not refund payment to a consumer **before** paying the total balance owed to the local florists or third-party seller.

H.B. 27 will go a long way in supporting and sustaining small-business florist shops across the state, especially as small luxury purchases such as florals are often the first line items to be cut as consumers tighten their budgets to withstand the looming inflation and difficult economy.

Thank you for your time, and I request a favorable report on H.B. 27.