

Testimony in Support of HB178

For Distinguished Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From Courtney Arnone
Cottage Food Business Operator
Parkville, MD

Subject Written Testimony in Support of HB 178

Distinguished Committee Members, my name is Courtney Arnone, and I am a home baker, operating a Cottage Food Business, and I would like to ask for your support for HB178.

I have just started my cottage food business and have only had one sale so far, so I know my story might be a little different than a lot you might be reading about. When the pandemic started, I got the idea that I wanted to try some of the baking I'd watch on all the baking shows I love and, luckily, I was gifted a stand mixer. I baked all kinds of things while I was stuck at home, lucky beyond all things that I was able to relax and not worry about my living arrangement, as my husband, son, and I live with my parents. I eventually found my way to decorating sugar cookies and I fell in love! I spent holidays baking tons of different kinds of sugar cookies for family and friends and I eventually came around to the idea of possibly making it a business. That led me to Facebook groups, which then led me to Cottage Food businesses. I could do that! I was a little disappointed to find out all the hoops cottage food bakers have to jump through.

Unfortunately, and most importantly, the restrictive annual sales cap for Cottage Food will not allow me to grow my business into something, alone, that can support my family. I will not be able to make enough for it to be the only source of income for myself, let alone thinking about having my husband be part of the business with me.

Maryland's Cottage Food Laws currently limit annual revenue to \$25,000 making Maryland's law more restrictive than thirty-nine other states. This restrictive sales cap is unnecessary because the MD Department of Health has already determined what non-hazardous foods can be safely prepared in a home kitchen.

By supporting HB178 to raise the \$25,000 annual sales cap from Cottage Food Laws, you would be helping to make Maryland a great place to start or grow a small business.