

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown and all members of the House Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony today on House Bill 355.

HB 355 is legislation to grant limited liability protections for privately owned campgrounds in Ohio. This idea was brought to me by a local business, Long's Retreat Family Resort. In crafting the bill, it is modeled after similar protections for Agritourism businesses that was passed in a previous General Assembly and is working as intended.

This legislation **is** a way of protecting campground owners from frivolous lawsuits brought by campers participating in activities that are inherently dangerous. This legislation **is NOT** an all-or-nothing protection when RV park and campground owners are negligent. It is important to note this legislation would extend liability protections for only those "risk inherent to camping", which is specifically defined in the bill and includes things such as features of the natural world, uneven terrain, wildlife, etc... Things such as a licensed swimming pool, would not be covered for these protections.

Imagine an example of a family camping at their local campground. They are enjoying nature and set off on a hike of the grounds. Because of naturally occurring uneven terrain, one of the campers fall and break their ankle. This requires a trip to the hospital and medical bills. Should the campground be held responsible for that? My position is they should not, and those hikers took on an inherent risk by being out in nature.

What if a family is enjoying a campfire in the evening, a very common camping activity. One of the campers suffers an accident and is burned. Again, a terrible accident, but not the fault of the campground owner.

Many times when a lawsuit is brought against a campground owner for some injury sustained from regular camping activities, the insurance company is inclined to settle. But there are still cost incurred by the business owner, such as increased premiums.

In order for campgrounds to benefit from their protections, the bill also requires the campground owner to post signage meeting the criteria within the legislation to give proper notice to their campers. Campers should have an expectation of the risk incurred by being in nature.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to talk with you about HB 355 and I will do my best to answer any questions from the committee.