

**House Bill 352 Written Proponent Testimony
House Civil Justice Committee, November 19, 2019**

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 352.

As the largest business organization in the Cincinnati Region, we speak with a bold voice on behalf of our members. Employers are constantly navigating the intricacies of the legal system at every level of government. House Bill 352 seeks to streamline the complex processes of discriminatory claims in Ohio while balancing the protections offered to employees throughout the state. The legislation is a reasonable reform that aims to ease compliance for businesses while maintaining strong protections for individuals.

Reducing the statute of limitations in these cases from six years to two will take Ohio from an extreme outlier to a more regular position. Two years is still longer than the federal standard (300 days) and far exceeds what Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania (180 days) and West Virginia (300 days) allow. Of our neighboring states, only Michigan has a longer standard (three years). This is an appropriate balance between business compliance and employee protections.

Addressing the issue of dual venues is also a key component of the bill. Using administrative exhaustion at the Ohio Civil Rights Commission prior to allowing a lawsuit to go forward gives businesses clarity for where they can expect to defend against claims of discrimination. This reduces confusion and cost all while maintaining appropriate avenues of relief for employee claims.

Finally, the other components of the bill around reforming individual liability for managers and supervisors, mirroring the federal standard for an affirmative defense and simplifying age discrimination cases are all sound changes that strike an equitable balance. Taken as a whole, House Bill 352 makes Ohio a better place to live, work and do business by increasing clarity and efficiency for employers all while providing employees with the strong protections they deserve.

Please reach out to me at 513.579.3120 or keagan@cincinnatiachamber.com if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued commitment to the success of our region.

Sincerely,



Katie Eagan
Vice President, Government Affairs