

Testimony Supporting Substitute House Bill 606
The Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association
Civil Justice Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives
May 18, 2020

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown, on behalf of the podiatric physicians and surgeons of the Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association (OHFAMA), I am writing to convey our association's support of Substitute House Bill 308, legislation sponsored by Representative Diane Grendell that will address the pressing need of COVID-19-related liability protection for Ohio's health care providers and businesses.

The issue of pandemic-related lawsuits has been of great concerns to Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons over the past few weeks, as we have remained committed as physicians to providing Ohioans emergency services during the pandemic in Ohio. Many of our members decided to temporarily reduce the level of services at their individual offices to aide the need for vital PPE equipment at Ohio's hospitals and other facilities at the initial outbreak of the virus to help "flatten the curve" for our state. One of the most difficult things during this time was not only being unable to fully treat our patients but also having to reduce our staffs in our offices in communities like yours.

With the renewed ability to provide "deferred care" and resume a relatively normal level of services to our patients, our members have been or are currently assembling detailed plans to make their offices a safe environment for our patients and staffs. Our members strongly remain committed to that principle. However, in recent discussions with OHFAMA members, the issue of pandemic-related lawsuits is heavily on their minds. We are all experiencing a "new world" of sorts in all segments of society in dealing with the extensive new demands to deal with COVID-19 and this uncertainty may also breed opportunity in some professional segments that could impede the ability of health care providers and other businesses to fully operate for your constituents.

Ohio's podiatric physicians and surgeons are supporting Substitute House Bill 606 because we believe Representatives Grendell and Seitz have crafted a bill that is before this committee that effectively deals with real-world liability issues that have arisen in the COVID-19 era. As always, thank you for considering our association's views on this and many issues before the General Assembly. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions on this important legislation.