

THE OHIO COUNCIL OF

Retail Merchants
The voice of retail since 1922

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February 12, 2020

The Honorable Tom Brinkman, Chairman
House Insurance Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Brinkman,

On behalf of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants and its more than 7,000 members, I write regarding House Bill 308 pending before this Committee. The Council recognizes, respects, and deeply values the contributions of Ohio's first responders. We are sensitive to the trauma – including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – that first responders often experience as a result of their jobs.

As you may be aware, Ohio's Workers' Compensation Act currently does not recognize injuries with a mental-only diagnosis. Consequently, House Bill 308 represents a significant change in the State's workers' compensation system – a change that has the potential to significantly increase the financial costs to the system and may have other unintended consequences as well. Instead, we believe that a special fund be established outside of, and separate from, the workers' compensation system. This would ensure that first responders receive the coverage they need and deserve for treating PTSD without inadvertently compromising the financial stability of the employer-funded workers' compensation system. We stand ready to work with all interested parties to find common ground and craft a proposal that works for first responders, municipalities and businesses.

The Council appreciates your consideration of our concerns and thanks you for the opportunity to present these issues to the committee.

Sincerely,



Alex T. Boehnke
Manager of Public Affairs