

THE OHIO COUNCIL OF

Retail Merchants
The voice of retail since 1922

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June 9, 2020

The Honorable Scott Wiggam
State and Local Government Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Wiggam:

Oh behalf of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants and our over 7,000 members, we write in support of HB 621, the Business First Act.

During the height of the coronavirus crisis, many of our members kept their doors open, providing communities with critical supplies and services during an extremely difficult time in our State and in our country. Many of our members, however, were forced to shutter their doors because they were not considered essential businesses. These closures placed significant hardships on business owners, their employees and their customers.

While businesses designated as essential did an exemplary job of providing vital services while keeping Ohioans safe, we believe that all businesses should have had the opportunity to continue to operate given their ability to meet the specified health and safety guidelines, similar to the current Director's order. House Bill 621 ensures that, in the unfortunate event of another health crisis, all Ohio businesses will have the opportunity to stay open as long as they can meet the guidelines and operate safely. In addition, it is our understanding an amendment is likely to be incorporated into the bill which would remove language concerning which products can be sold during a health crisis. We fully support this amendment and urge you to make it part of the bill.

For these expressed reasons, we support passage of House Bill 621 and we thank both sponsors for bringing it forward. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this important piece of legislation. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Respectfully,



Alex T. Boehnke
Manager of Public Affairs