



**BEFORE THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE
OF THE OHIO SENATE
SENATOR KIRK SCHURING, CHAIRMAN**

**TESTIMONY
OF
ROB BRUNDRETT
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC POLICY SERVICES
THE OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION**

DECEMBER 8, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Rob Brundrett. I am the Director of Public Policy Services for The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). Thank you for the opportunity to provide brief proponent testimony today on Senate Bill 384. The OMA was created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers; today, it has nearly 1,400 members. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing.

Manufacturing is the largest of the Ohio's 20 industry sectors and contributes more than \$112 billion annually in GDP, according to the state's most recent data. Manufacturing comprises nearly 17% of the state's economic output. Almost 700,000 Ohioans work in manufacturing. Ohio manufacturing employees earn, on average, more than \$61,500 in wages, according to recently released figures.

Throughout the years, the OMA has consistently advocated for an efficient and effective workers' compensation system that benefits workers, employers, and the economy of the state.

Senate Bill 384 provides a solution that helps ensure that Ohio's first responders who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) receive treatment. The bill provides compensation and benefits for first responders diagnosed with PTSD without a physical injury received in the course of and arising out of the person's employment as a first responder.

Ohio's workers' compensation system was designed to compensate injured workers' physical injuries and any mental conditions that arise as a result of such physical injuries. Because of the precedent-setting nature of such action, the OMA has historically opposed proposals that would permit PTSD compensation in cases in which there is no associated physical injury. The adoption of a mental-only diagnosis would mark a significant change to the Ohio workers' compensation system.

However, Senate Bill 384 provides a workable solution to protect the principles of Ohio's workers' compensation system while providing for PTSD coverage for first responders. Senate Bill 384 preserves the fundamental tenants of Ohio's workers' compensation system by creating the separate State Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Coverage Fund, administered by the Director of Public Safety, for the purpose of paying the compensation and benefits provided by the bill. Coverage under this proposed system is intended to be comparable to coverage in the Bureau of Workers' Compensation system.

The OMA appreciates the Senate's willingness to consider such an innovative and creative approach to an identified health issue among first responders.

The OMA would like to thank Senator Hackett for working on this bill with all the stakeholders involved, in what can be a very personal issue. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.