

**Senate Bill 308 Written Proponent Testimony
Senate Judiciary Committee, May 20, 2020**

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 308.

Our members and businesses across the Cincinnati region stand ready to be part of the solution to the health and economic challenges facing our state. In late March, business leaders from throughout our region launched the RESTART Task Force with the goal of guiding the business community through this crisis in a successful manner. The legislation before you today will help us accomplish that goal. Providing liability protections for businesses gives them the confidence they require to reopen safely and responsibly to deliver the goods and services Ohioans need. Businesses are already facing unprecedented financial challenges. Removing this obstacle will allow businesses to focus on getting their companies back on track rather than worrying about potentially devastating legal liabilities.

The bill grants qualified immunity to Ohio businesses, non-profits and religious organizations. It also covers situations when healthcare workers are providing emergency care. These groups are working hard to ensure their physical spaces and operations are sanitary and prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. They are also critical components of economic and daily life for nearly all Ohioans. What they do not need right now is the threat of a costly legal dispute over something that is largely out of their control, if they are pursuing the appropriate level of caution and care. This bill does not provide protections in cases of intentional or willful misconduct that exposes people to unnecessary risks.

Businesses are acting in good faith to bring our economy back from one of the most disruptive incidents in our history. By supporting Senate Bill 308, the state would also be acting in good faith with businesses, non-profits, religious institutions and healthcare providers. We need to quickly and responsibly get our businesses back to providing important goods and services to Ohioans. This legislation is an important step in that direction and is a high priority of the Cincinnati Chamber on behalf of all of our members.

We appreciate Senator Huffman's efforts to lead this bill. Please reach out to me at 513.579.3120 or keagan@cincinnati-chamber.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