



Dan Acton
House Bill 606 Proponent Testimony
Senate Judiciary Committee
June 24, 2020

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the committee, my name is Dan Acton and I am the Government Affairs Director of the Ohio Real Estate Investors Association (OREIA). OREIA represents 13 local chapters across Ohio with nearly 3,000 members consisting of the smaller real estate investors and housing providers who typically own single family housing units. My background has been more than 30 years in the property management and ownership industry. I am providing a brief statement of support on House Bill 606, a bill to provide liability protection for business operators in Ohio, specifically those small business operators that are housing providers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges for Ohio's housing providers: delayed or unpaid rent, forced utility connections that will likely go unpaid and become the responsibility of the property owner, mortgages that need to be paid and general anxiety about the future of our member's properties. For many members, the properties they own represent their entire retirement portfolio and disruptions like this can have catastrophic results. Subjecting housing providers to potential lawsuits from tenants or their invited guests, over whom we have no control or management, nor are we asking for such regulation, could be the difference between surviving this storm or being buried under its weight. Housing providers must account for repair technicians, landscape or yard maintenance crews or even the landlord themselves entering the premises, but as with any other business there are no guarantees that those individuals are not symptomatic. Also consider properties that may have common areas like small foyers, common entryways, stairs or even elevators; it would be nearly impossible for a housing provider to ensure that there is complete protection for tenants. It is for these reasons we support HB 606.

Additionally, housing providers have a duty of care under the landlord tenant law to provide a safe and sanitary condition for common areas. Our members take that requirement seriously. Housing providers have been talking to their tenants individually throughout the pandemic and the stay at home process about sanitizing units and keeping themselves safe. These conversations are constructive and respectful and all parties involved are exercising due care to prevent the spread of disease. Information is key and with everyone doing their part to minimize disease spread as a state we will be successful in containing the disease.

OREIA appreciates this effort and applauds the move to protect the small businesses of Ohio from potentially devastating lawsuits.