

June 23, 2020

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning and Ranking Member Thomas:

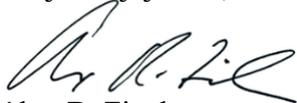
On behalf of the Columbus Partnership, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding Substitute House Bill 606, which grants civil immunity to a person who provides services for essential businesses and operations for injury, death, or loss that was caused by the transmission of COVID-19 during the period of emergency order. As the bill was being deliberated in the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee, The Columbus Partnership provided proponent testimony in support of the bill. Unfortunately, an amendment was added during the House floor vote that created a new presumption of coverage for certain COVID-19 positive workers under the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation. Our members have significant concerns with this provision and would request that provision be removed from HB 606.

The Columbus Partnership is a non-profit, membership-based leadership organization of 75 chairpersons, chief executive officers, and senior executives from the region's leading businesses and institutions. Our members include 15 Fortune 1000 CEOs, as well as the leaders of the nation's largest university and world's largest research and development organization. As our community and businesses across the State of Ohio prepare to re-open, we must ensure that companies have the ability to safely participate in the economy without fear of punishment for potential COVID-19 transmissions that are out of their control or purview.

Our organization's mission is to provide a long-term vision for achieving greater economic prosperity and we have positioned Columbus to be one of the strongest environments to attract businesses and investment in the world. This bill will serve as a model for leaders across the state and country as we work to ensure that individuals who provide services for essential businesses and operations have the ability to preserve public peace, health and safety. With the current economic development landscape being more competitive than ever, it is important that this bill is passed and utilized as a competitive advantage for job creation in Ohio. The passage of Sub. HB 606, without the workers compensation language, will give businesses across the State of Ohio the ability to return to work and continue to grow our economy in a safe way that will best serve companies, employees and customers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony as an interested party to Substitute HB 606.

Very truly yours,



Alex R. Fischer
President and CEO

ARF/gb