



House Bill 606 – Proponent Testimony
Senate Judiciary Committee
Lisa Barrett, Deputy Chief Legal Officer, Cleveland Clinic
June 24, 2020

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing Cleveland Clinic to provide testimony for House Bill 606, which would create civil immunity for health care and emergency services provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. My name is Lisa Barrett, and I am Deputy Chief Legal Officer and Director of Litigation at Cleveland Clinic.

During this unprecedented time and without delay, Cleveland Clinic quickly carried out our mission to care for patients and serve our community. In addition to treating COVID-19 patients at our hospitals, the Clinic has undertaken a leadership role in coordinating the COVID-19 response in Northern Ohio between hospitals, local health departments and congregate living facilities, such as nursing homes.

As a leader in providing care for Ohioans affected by COVID-19, the need for civil liability legislation in the state remains a major concern.

Protecting our employees during this pandemic is essential to ensure providers take all steps necessary to adequately respond to this health crisis. In the midst of a statewide pandemic, disaster, or emergency, Ohioans cannot afford to have their health care providers inhibited from necessary action due to fear of litigation or liability.

It is also important that this legislation passes while preserving language that includes liability for wrongful death claims. Removing such language would have an adverse effect on healthcare institutions on the front lines in this fight.

Cleveland Clinic supports House Bill 606 and urges the committee to be supportive as well. Now is the time to ensure that our employees are protected as they care for Ohioans during these times.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.