

**Written Testimony of Melissa Carmony
Grocery Worker and Member of
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 75
Before
Senate Judiciary Committee
Ohio State Legislature
Wednesday, June 24, 2020**

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee my name is Melissa Carmony and I am a member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 75, and I am testifying today in support of the workers compensation amendment in HB 606.

I have been a member of UFCW Local 75 for 20 years and I had been working at Kroger since the outbreak of coronavirus in Ohio started, until I was infected myself. I was diagnosed in early April and as my doctor was filling out my paperwork he noted that this should fall under workers compensation because it was very probably I contracted it while working since I hadn't gone anywhere and was following all of the recommendations from public health professionals. Through my union negotiated benefits, I would normally qualify for short term disability to cover at least some of my wages while out of work due to illness. Unfortunately, since my doctor stated it was likely I contracted it at work and marked it as a workers comp case, I cannot get the short term disability unless I am denied workers comp. I have been informed that because Ohio is behind with contact tracing and it was so long ago, it may be impossible for me to prove that I contracted it at work. Even though I am scared of spreading this disease to my co-workers and customers, I am hopeful that I will be released to return to work soon because I have not had any income in months.

The work that my co-workers and I do every day ensures Ohioans can feed their families. We work on the frontlines every day, risking our health to feed our communities. During the peak of this pandemic I was often exposed to thousands of people a day in my store. This pandemic is far from over and my co-workers and I are still at high risk of exposure. Passage of this amendment would protect me and any other frontline workers who have or will contract this deadly disease.

I deserve to go to a job everyday where my employer cares about my safety and does everything they can to make sure we don't get sick. I can say this to you today because I am a member of a union that supports me when I lift up my voice, but that is not true for every worker in Ohio. I hope that some of the other provisions of this bill that protects bad employers does not become law.

I urge you to show your support for the workers like me that have kept our communities families fed during this difficult time. Please support HB 606 and protect me from the anxiety and hardship of contracting coronavirus.

Thank you,
Melissa Carmony
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