



To: Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair John Eklund

From: Beth Lear, Vice President of Government Affairs Associated Builders and Contractors of Ohio

RE: House Bill 606 – Proponent Testimony

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and Senators,

I am Beth Lear, Vice President of Government Affairs for Ohio's Associated Builders and Contractors. ABC of Ohio and our members strongly support House Bill 606, which would "Grant immunity to essential workers who transmit COVID-19."

Our members view liability protections for those whose services were deemed "essential" during the COVID-19 crisis as a **crucial and urgent** legislative issue. We have continued to work safely to keep our infrastructure intact and provide vital services to Ohioans. These essential workers have the right to be protected from baseless litigation.

ABC of Ohio provided our member best practices for the construction industry to the Governor's office to assist with the re-opening plans. Health and safety have always been part of our ethos. In response to COVID-19, we continually update members with coronavirus-related information, including the creation of a website, www.OhioHealthyConstruction.org, which, at their request, our national organization has been gifted to use for members nationwide.

Plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, masons, road constructors, general contractors and all other skilled tradesmen, tradeswomen, business owners, suppliers and trainers who have continued to work through the pandemic *deserve* the civil protections provided in HB 606.

Recently ABC National joined over two hundred state associations and nationwide groups, including Chambers of Commerce, manufacturing organizations and agricultural bodies to name just a few, in support of similar federal legislation.

Their joint letter stated in part,

"Our associations represent the tens of millions of women and men in America working in essential industries that have been called upon to continue operating to support our nation's response to the COVID-19 crisis. Our member companies are doing their best to serve the public interest, protect our communities and minimize harm to the American people during these uncertain times. Yet because they have remained operational during times of remarkable legal uncertainty, they risk becoming the targets of coronavirus-related lawsuits that will ultimately do nothing to reduce the spread of this disease or address the suffering that Americans have endured because of it. Congress must act to ensure that such misguided litigation does not derail our recovery."

ABC of Ohio agrees that our State Legislature must act as well, and we request your quick response through HB 606.