



# CITIZENS FOR COMMUNITY VALUES

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June 29, 2020

To: Chair John Ecklund  
Vice Chair Nathan H. Manning  
Ranking Member Cecil Thomas  
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Citizens for Community Values

Re: Proponent Written Testimony, HB 606

**In times of crisis, churches and ministries are often our first responders.** This has been especially true during the Coronavirus crisis. In the months since the Stay-At-Home orders were first issued, thousands of churches and ministries throughout Ohio have provided incredible help to Ohioans, typically with no or little assistance from the state. These services include:

- Mental health support residential facilities
- Food pantries
- Food delivery
- Youth services
- Anti-drug and alcohol abuse
- Serving human trafficking victims
- Resources for successful re-entry after incarceration
- Homeless shelters, food, shower, and laundry services
- Baby formula, diapers, wipes
- Virtual parenting classes
- Homeschooling educational resources and support

In this light, Citizens for Community Values thanks you for your consideration of HB 606, and we strongly urge you to support the bill. It provides essential immunity protections for Ohioans who have continued to serve and provide resources to those most in need in our communities. We also thank you for the urgency of your consideration, in hopes that it goes into effect immediately.

This bill is a common sense measure for today. It also acts as caring and compassionate protection for the institutions that make the Stay-at-Home order and COVID-19 recovery possible. Sadly, the reality is there are those out there who may seek to take advantage of the current crisis by bringing frivolous lawsuits, even against organizations who are trying to serve them.



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Without this important legislation, opportunist attorneys may quickly bring lawsuits claiming liability for COVID-19 exposure. This includes alleging exposure to COVID-19 while benefitting from an essential service. Faith leaders, staff, and congregants make up an indispensable army of essential workers, and HB 606 provides important security for them to continue to bless our community.

Thank you for your proactive work in the legislature,

Aaron Baer  
President  
Citizens for Community Values