



**BEFORE THE COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE
THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVE DICK STEIN, CHAIR**

**HOUSE BILL 435
TESTIMONY OF ROSS MCGREGOR
OWNER
PENTAFLEX INC.**

October 6, 2021

Chairman Stein, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, my name is Ross McGregor, and I am here today in my capacity as the owner of a manufacturing company, Pentaflex, headquartered in Springfield, and on behalf of The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA), of which I am a longtime member, to testify in opposition of House Bill 435.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Ohio manufacturers led the way in workplace safety while supplying the nation with essential goods, including personal protective equipment and pharmaceuticals. As the state's largest economic sector, manufacturers continue to lead the economic recovery as we transition to a post-pandemic world.

At a company like Pentaflex, with more than 150 associates, it is critical to ensure that our team members have a safe and healthy workplace. The safety and well-being of my employees and their families is my primary concern. Safety is not just about protecting employees and guests from traditional workplace injuries; it is also about making sure employees are protected to the greatest extent possible from new workplace challenges like COVID-19 or any other illness that can be easily transmitted.

House Bill 435 would allow gaping exemptions from any COVID-19 vaccine requirement that a private employer may implement to help ensure workplace safety. These exemptions would make such an employer's vaccination requirement meaningless and would be nearly impossible to manage. Further, businesses trying to navigate this legislation would open themselves to potential discrimination cases brought by an aggrieved or disgruntled employee.

Production plants and workplaces across the state remain susceptible to outbreaks. Supply chain disruptions, rising input costs, and exacerbated labor shortages are already threatening businesses. We should not continue to add to these uncertainties and disruptions.

My company's leadership remains – like all private enterprises – the best and most informed decision makers when it comes to managing my facility. House Bill 435 oversteps the line between public and private. This legislation proposes state government making decisions for my business with respect to the safety and well-being of my employees, as well as anyone else who enters my facility. Our company is already required to protect anyone who enters our facilities, and we are liable if someone is injured. Employers are in the best position to decide what measures make the most sense to protect their companies, not the government.

Every policy decision that impacts Ohio's manufacturing competitiveness in turn affects our economic health and job creation. Throughout the pandemic, Ohio has maintained its position as a national and global manufacturing leader. Let's make sure we keep Ohio at the forefront of the nation's recovery.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 435. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.