

THE OHIO COUNCIL OF

*Retail Merchants*  
*The voice of retail since 1922*

50 W. Broad St., Suite 1111  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
614.221.7833 • 614.221.7020 fax  
www.ocrm.net • info@ohioretailmerchants.com

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Jay Edwards, Chair  
Committee on Economic and Workforce Development  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Edwards:

On behalf of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants and our over 7,000 members, we write in support of HB 215, the Business First Act.

During the initial stages of the coronavirus crisis, many of our members kept their doors open, providing communities with critical supplies and services during an extremely difficult time in our State and in our country. Many of our members, however, were forced to shutter their doors because they were not considered essential businesses. These closures placed significant hardships on business owners, their employees and their customers.

While businesses designated as essential did an exemplary job of providing vital services while keeping Ohioans safe, we believe that all businesses should have had the opportunity to continue to operate given their ability to meet the specified health and safety guidelines. House Bill 215 ensures that, in the unfortunate event of another health crisis, all Ohio businesses will have the opportunity to stay open as long as they can meet the guidelines and operate safely.

For these expressed reasons, we support passage of House Bill 215 and we thank both sponsors for bringing it forward. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this important piece of legislation. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Respectfully,



Alex T. Boehnke  
Manager of Public Affairs