



*BEFORE THE HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 20*

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 20. My name is Justin Barnes, and I am the Director of Workforce, Small Business, and Technology Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

As you may know, for 129 years, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate, and we represent over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans. As part of our mission, we seek to make Ohio the best place in the country for businesses to operate and grow.

House Bill 20, introduced by Representative Swearingen, would establish in the Ohio Revised Code the Ohio Computer Crimes Act. This legislation aims to update and enhance the ORC by giving law enforcement officials and prosecutors new and improved methods to address cybercrimes that can disrupt operations at businesses across the state.

Among our membership are scores of small businesses who are members of the Ohio Small Business Council, a standing policy committee within the Ohio Chamber. These are owners of small, for-profit companies that may not have the capacity to have a full-time cybersecurity professional on staff. Cybersecurity is a primary concern among these business owners, and the ability under this legislation to empower prosecutors with modernized tools to protect sensitive data and protect small businesses is of great importance.

We thank Representative Swearingen for his work on introducing this legislation. Efforts in previous General Assemblies to pass this legislation have been bipartisan in nature, and we thank former Representative Baldrige for his hard work on this issue in the past. We look forward to working with you on this proposal to ensure Ohio's small businesses are better protected from computer crimes. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation.