



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH PROVIDER SERVICES COMMITTEE OPPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 285

Chairman Swearingen, Vice-Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 285 (HB 285). My name is Kevin Shimp and I am an associate attorney at the law firm Dickinson Wright testifying on behalf of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate. The organization represents over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio and their mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

In the Ohio Chamber's efforts to champion economic competitiveness and defend against onerous government mandates, we oppose HB 285 because it will drive up labor costs and impose a one size fits all government mandated employment policy on Ohio's hospitals.

Ohio's hospitals play an integral role in communities across the state and help assure every Ohioan has access to world class healthcare. Presently in Ohio, there are 250 hospitals operated by 15 different health systems, and these hospitals had over 37.7 million patient encounters in 2023.

Hospitals are also vital parts of the Buckeye State economy by employing more than 430,000 employees and paying over \$20 billion in wages to their employees. In fact, Ohio's hospital systems have a total economic impact of approximately \$91.7 billion dollars on a yearly basis.

While the Ohio Chamber takes no position on the loan to grant program the bill establishes, the bill's strict nurse to patient staffing ratios harm Ohio's hospitals by imposing costly government mandates that diminish their ability to set their own workplace policies – a right all employers should have. Similarly, House Bill 285 proposes additional requirements on hospitals including adopting nurse staffing plans developed without any input from the hospital's administrative team.

Taken together, along with \$25,000 fines for a single violation of the bill's provisions, House Bill 285 unreasonably interferes with the employment relationship between hospitals and their nurses. The legislation is also problematic because it prevents

hospitals and their employees from crafting tailored solutions that work best for all parties by instituting government regulations that dictate the terms of employment.

The Ohio Chamber believes hospitals – and all employers – should be free from burdensome government mandates on employment practices that fail to consider what is practical or makes sense for each individual hospital. Likewise, we believe employment practices are best addressed in labor negotiations between individual employers and their workers.

In closing, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce opposes House Bill 285 since it establishes a one size fits all approach to nurse staffing at Ohio's hospitals that can interfere with the ability of hospitals to adopt individualized policies that work best for patients, nurses, and the hospitals themselves.