

November 20, 2024

The Honorable Brian Lampton, Chair
Ohio House Insurance Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Senate Bill 63 – Written Proponent Testimony

Chair Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Jarrells, and Members of the House Insurance Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Ohio Business Roundtable, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 63 (Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures).

My name is Nikki Cooper, and I am the Vice President of Business Engagement and External Affairs for the Ohio Business Roundtable, a statewide business association comprised of CEOs and Presidents of the top companies in the state. We currently have over 126 members, collectively employing over 600,000 Ohioans and generating a revenue of more than \$2.5 trillion, which contributes significantly to Ohio's economy.

Our membership includes industry leading companies representing over 20 Ohio industries, including—but not limited to—companies such as KeyBank and Huntington in the banking sector; American Financial and Nationwide in the insurance sector; Kokosing in construction; CareSource, Cleveland Clinic, and many of Ohio's children's hospitals in healthcare; The Ohio State University and Miami University in higher education; Owens Corning, RPM International, Inc., and Procter & Gamble in manufacturing; AEP and Marathon in energy and utilities, among others.

The Ohio Business Roundtable supports policies that will strengthen the state's economic and workforce development, reduce onerous barriers for businesses, and foster an environment for businesses to invest and grow in Ohio while competing in the global economy. A predictable, consistent and fair civil justice system is crucial to these tenets.

Unfortunately, under current law, businesses can be named in asbestos lawsuits without plaintiffs being required to demonstrate any connection between the company and the case. This forces businesses to incur significant legal costs to remove themselves from unwarranted lawsuits, while also placing considerable strain on the legal system in the process.



Senate Bill 63 will address this issue by requiring plaintiffs to submit a sworn information form specifying the evidence that provides the basis for each claim against each defendant. This common-sense measure will help protect businesses from lawsuit abuse and enhance confidence in Ohio's civil justice system by establishing clear guidelines for asbestos litigation.

In the 1990's, Ohio employers experienced an onslaught of nefarious lawsuits where plaintiffs abused tort claims to secure their own profits, stifling economic growth across the state. When the Ohio Business Roundtable began in 1992, tort reform was one of our organization's fundamental priorities to protect businesses from the overreach of lawsuit abuse. While significant progress has been made, abuses persist, including the practice of over-naming defendants in asbestos cases.

Ohio's business community deserves a fair and predictable justice system, and Senate Bill 63 provides such reliability. The Ohio Business Roundtable urges the committee's support on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Nikki Cooper

Vice President of Business Engagement and External Affairs
Ohio Business Roundtable

