



OHIO COUNCIL OF
RETAIL
MERCHANTS

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Scott Wiggam
Chair, Ohio House State & Local Government Committee
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Wiggam:

On behalf of the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants (The Council), we write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 98, legislation aimed at addressing fraudulent business filings. As an organization representing the interests of retailers across Ohio, we firmly believe that this legislation is essential for protecting businesses, consumers, and the integrity of our state's commercial landscape.

The Council is committed to promoting a fair and transparent business environment that fosters consumer confidence. Fraudulent business filings and business identity theft not only pose significant risks to individual businesses, but also undermine consumer trust in the marketplace. They can lead to financial losses, reputational damage, and erode public confidence in the legitimacy of businesses. By enacting legislation to address these issues, Ohio can establish robust mechanisms to prevent and prosecute fraud, protecting businesses and consumers alike.

Senate Bill 98 puts forth sensible measures to protect businesses large and small operating in Ohio. First, by streamlining the process for filing complaints of fraud, the Secretary of State can quickly identify fraudulent activity. Additionally, the reinstatement of canceled business entities provision in this legislation serves as an important tool for protecting the operations of legitimate businesses while safeguarding against fraud. Most businesses who resume operations do so within a year. Often fraudsters will obtain the information of a canceled business several years later and begin opening lines of credit using that entity's name. By reforming the process for reinstating a canceled business and requiring the additional disclosure of information legitimate businesses would be happy to provide, Ohio can further curtail business identity theft.

In conclusion, the Council wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 98, and we applaud Senator Rulli and Secretary LaRose for bringing it forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 98. We look forward to the positive impact that this legislation will have on Ohio's business community.

Sincerely,

Alex T. Boehnke
Vice President of Legislative & Corporate Affairs