

**Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Micah Cook
Senate Bill 126
Ohio Senate Health Committee
December 13, 2023**

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 126 on behalf of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with 5,200 members, including practicing family physicians, family medicine residents, and medical students. Since 1948, the OAFP has represented the professional interests of Ohio family physicians, provided postgraduate medical education, and encouraged medical students to enter this field and to advance the patient-physician relationship. The mission of the OAFP is to improve the health of patients by advocating for and advancing the specialty of family medicine.

For over 75 years, our work has been guided by foundational values, including advocating for regulations that empower family physicians and their patients to thrive in the healthcare infrastructure and supporting initiatives that increase the number of family physicians practicing in Ohio. Senate Bill 126 would prohibit certain noncompete clauses in physician contracts.

Extremely restrictive noncompete agreements can worsen physician shortages in a community, forcing physicians to relocate to distant locations and unnecessarily limiting the delivery of healthcare and continuity of care for patients. By prohibiting certain immoderate provisions of employment contracts, Senate Bill 126 will begin to ensure a patient's access to care from the physician of their choice.

This bill reduces limits draconian noncompete clauses that stifles Ohio's family physicians freedom to focus on improving the healthcare outcomes for Ohioans. We greatly appreciate the work of Senator Johnson to bring this bill forward. We thank the committee for their consideration and urge support for this important legislation.