



**House Insurance Committee
HB 105 Proponent Testimony
Evan Callicoat, Director of State Policy
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Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Craig, Ranking Member Tims, members of the House Insurance Committee, My name is Evan Callicoat, and I serve as the Director of State Policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 105 (HB105)—a critical step toward reforming our civil litigation system and placing important consumer protections in place. The increased use of third-party litigation funding creates a speculative market out of our country’s judicial process. This speculation harms the legal system and the business climate of our state. Even those who are not the target of the litigation feel the impacts in increased costs for products, insurance and other vital needs. Our members, who operate on tight margins and depend on predictable legal outcomes, face increased financial uncertainty when meritless claims result in impacts to their businesses. HB 10 is designed to restore balance by ensuring that only well-founded disputes proceed through our legal system, and greater transparency around third-party funding of civil litigation ensures a level playing field for all litigants.

We understand that third-party financing can be a way for legitimate claims to move forward where individuals may otherwise lack the resources to do so. However, it can also encourage claims with little to no merit, and can create perverse incentives:

- **Discouraging Reasonable Settlements:** When external funders are involved, there could be pressure to push for litigation rather than a fair, reasonable settlement. This not only prolongs disputes but also undermines the natural incentive to resolve conflicts efficiently.
- **Encouraging Meritless Lawsuits:** Funding provided by parties who stand to profit from a lawsuit, regardless of its legal foundation, fuels a speculative environment. Such practices lead to an increase in lawsuits that are not driven by genuine grievances, thereby clogging our already overburdened courts and escalating litigation costs for all parties involved.

The consequences of these practices extend far beyond individual cases. When our legal system is inundated with meritless claims, it not only delays justice for those with legitimate concerns but also essentially becomes a “tax” that litigants have to consider as cases drag on for months, more than likely years. For Ohio’s agricultural community, where every dollar counts, the ripple effects can be devastating, diverting resources away from vital investments in our farms, communities, and economy.

HB 105 offers a balanced approach. It aims to curb the harmful practices of speculative litigation while preserving the rights of individuals to seek redress when truly warranted. By establishing more precise parameters for litigation funding and holding all parties to higher



standards of accountability, this legislation will reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits that burden our courts, encourage genuine, merit-based dispute resolution, and protect the economic vitality of Ohio's agricultural and business communities. We respectfully urge your support for House Bill 105 to ensure that Ohio's legal system remains fair, efficient, and accessible to all—without being manipulated by external interests that thrive on litigation for profit.