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Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 11.

This bill is a direct response to one of the most harmful and growing practices in today's workforce: non-compete agreements. These restrictive employment contracts, which prevent workers from seeking employment in their field after leaving a job, effectively trap workers in exploitative conditions.

I want to share some real-life examples to show how horrible these agreements can be. Recently, I was contacted by a nurse from the Akron area who was forced to sign a non-compete agreement that prohibited her from working within 60 miles of her hospital. That meant she could not work at hospitals in Akron, but also in Canton, Cleveland, or Massillon—essentially locking her out of the entire region.

I also heard from someone in Cincinnati, working in the medical field, who was told they could not work in their field at all for one year. This person is now considering going back to school to completely change careers because they feel trapped in a job they want to leave but can't. Both individuals have asked for their information to remain private for fear of retaliation.

And in fact my own staffer Patrick worked at Jimmy Johns while they had their noncompete agreements, he was locked out of waiting or working in other restaurants while in high school and in College, which, I don't have to tell you are the two biggest sources of employment for younger people just starting in the workforce.

These examples highlight just how far non-competes have gone—from highly paid executives to low-wage workers, in all fields from restaurant work to fields like healthcare. These agreements are not about protecting trade secrets; they're about keeping workers stuck, with no ability to pursue better wages, better working conditions, or new opportunities.

Senate Bill 11 seeks to address this problem by preventing companies from using non-competes to trap workers in exploitative positions, and it will promote a healthier, more dynamic job market that benefits both businesses and workers.

This bill is about fairness, transparency, and fostering a more competitive economy in Ohio. Workforce development is the war-cry of this entire body, but until we protect the workers of this State, it does not matter how much we incentivize employers to come here. Only when we will empower workers and allow them to pursue better opportunities without the fear of legal retribution, will we actually foster innovation and entrepreneurship that will benefit us all.

Thank you, and I would be happy to take any questions.