



OHIO ALLIANCE FOR CIVIL JUSTICE



BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OPPONENT TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 131

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 131. My name is Tony Long, and I am the General Counsel for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce testifying on behalf of the Ohio Alliance for Civil Justice (OACJ).

Founded in the mid-1980s, the OACJ is an organization dedicated to maintaining a fair, predictable, and balanced civil justice climate in Ohio. The OACJ is comprised of representatives of dozens of Ohio trade and professional associations, small and large businesses, medical groups, farmers, non-profit organizations, and local government associations for a combined representation of more than 100,000 individuals and businesses. The OACJ's leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations: NFIB Ohio, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, Ohio Hospital Association, Ohio Manufacturers' Association, Ohio Society of CPAs, and the Ohio State Medical Association. OACJ works to ensure that those harmed can seek appropriate recovery from the responsible parties, while also balancing the interests of all parties in litigation.

In the organization's efforts to promote a strong business climate in Ohio, SB 131 raises concerns within the OACJ because it proposes a statutorily mandated method for calculating diminished vehicle value that could potentially increase costs for Ohio consumers and businesses. Currently, within the confines of existing case law, entities can account for the individual circumstance of each accident when determining a car's diminished value following a collision. That flexibility plays an important role in resolving insurance disputes quickly and keeping insurance rates as low as possible.

Senate Bill 131 could disrupt this flexibility because it proposes a single statewide standard for determining a car's valuation after an accident that was first adopted by the 10th District Court of Appeals. This standard is not universally adopted across Ohio's counties and as a result could increase operating costs for Ohio businesses operating outside of Franklin County, which may harm Ohio's top 5 ranking in CNBC's America's Top States for Business ranking.

While the OACJ currently opposes SB 131, the organization is open to meeting with interested parties to find a viable solution that accommodates our concerns about potential cost increases while also addressing the issues raised in previous testimonies.

In closing, the OACJ urges this committee to reject SB 131 as currently drafted because it may lead to higher costs for Ohio businesses and could jeopardize Ohio's strong business friendly environment.