



**BEFORE THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE
OF THE OHIO SENATE
SENATOR KIRK SCHURING, CHAIRMAN**

**TESTIMONY
OF
ROB BRUNDRETT
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC POLICY SERVICES
THE OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION**

NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Rob Brundrett. I am the Director of Public Policy Services for The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional testimony today on House Bill 308. The OMA was created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers; today, it has nearly 1,400 members. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing.

Manufacturing is the largest of the Ohio's 20 industry sectors and contributes more than \$112 billion annually in GDP, according to the state's most recent data. Manufacturing comprises nearly 17% of the state's economic output. More than 700,000 Ohioans work in manufacturing. Ohio manufacturing employees earn, on average, more than \$61,500 in wages, according to recently released figures.

Throughout the years, the OMA has consistently advocated for an efficient and effective workers' compensation system that benefits workers, employers, and the economy of the state.

As we have outlined in prior testimony, Ohio's workers' compensation system was designed to compensate injured workers' physical injuries/illnesses and any mental conditions that arise as a result of such physical injuries/illnesses. The OMA has historically opposed proposals, including House Bill 308, that would permit PTSD compensation in cases in which there is no associated physical injury or illness. The adoption of a mental-only diagnosis would mark a significant change to the Ohio workers' compensation system.

Once a fundamental tenet of the workers' compensation system – like the physical injury requirement – is compromised, the potential for the system to be compromised by additional eroded principles is a real danger. The result will be increased workers' compensation costs for public and private employers alike. The implications of those cost increases will be felt across the board and will impact Ohio's business climate.

Given that mental health benefits have parity with physical health benefits under health insurance plans, it is important to have a broader conversation about where PTSD arising apart from a workplace physical injury/illness is most effectively and appropriately financed. Alternatives to House Bill 308 and the workers' compensation system have been identified. These solutions would provide the benefits required by our first responders while maintaining the fundamental principles of the system. The OMA has been a vocal proponent of such alternative solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.