



April 19, 2021

The Honorable Brett Hillyer
Chair, Ohio House Civil Justice Committee
77 S. High St., 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Hillyer:

We are writing on behalf of our respective organizations and our 30,000 plus business-owner members to lend our support for House Bill 229. House Bill 229 (HB 229) will provide qualified immunity from civil liability to owners of campgrounds for injuries resulting from a well-delineated and defined list of risks inherent to camping. We commend and thank Representatives Wilkin and Swearingen for reintroducing this important legislation promoting a common-sense civil justice system.

Businesses are faced with many costs, including taxes, insurance, utilities, as well as the costs associated with defending lawsuits. These costs can be substantial, and the Ohio General Assembly has taken many strides over the past couple of decades to create and preserve a stable, predictable legal climate in our state. Our associations have long been supportive of such efforts to provide certainty to business owners while preserving the ability of individuals to seek appropriate redress through the courts. We believe House Bill 229 achieves this appropriate balance for Ohio's campgrounds.

Campgrounds in Ohio are confronted with inherent risks given they are outdoor businesses and are subject to the whims of nature and the features of the natural world. These facilities need the protections in HB 229 to protect them from a frivolous lawsuit that could shut them down. HB 229 does not prevent justice, allowing individuals to sue for a host of different reasons including willful or wanton disregard for safety by the campground owner. Patrons are further protected as HB 229 requires posting of signage that informs patrons of the risks inherent with camping.

Several years ago, Ohio recognized the importance of the agritourism industry and extended nearly identical protections to agritourist businesses as those contained within HB 229. We view HB 229 as the next logical step to ensure Ohio's campgrounds, visited by over two million individuals last year, can continue to serve guests from Ohio and all over the country. House Bill 355, similar legislation from the 133rd General Assembly passed the Ohio House in January 2020.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 229. We recommend passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher J. Ferruso".

Christopher J. Ferruso
Legislative Director
Ohio NFIB

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Shimp".

Kevin Shimp
Director, Labor & Legal Affairs
Ohio Chamber of Commerce

cc: Members of the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee