



Representative D.J. Swearingen

89th House District

Sponsor Testimony House Bill 229

Thank you Chair Schaffer Vice- Chair Huffman, Ranking member Fedor, and all members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee for allowing us an opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 229. This legislation was passed out of the House last G.A. 65-31. We worked with the Ohio Association of Justice to address their concerns with the bill. This as-introduced version this GA incorporates those agreed upon amendments from last year.

This bill will offer campground owners protections against frivolous lawsuits regarding injuries to campers and hikers that are out of the owner's control. Which means that the uncontrollable environment surrounding camping, like bugs, plants, animals, terrain, and other parts of nature, will not be held against the owner and operators. It also takes into account any negligent behavior on the part of the camper or visitor that results in any kind of injury or even death. This will allow campground owners and operators to continue to invest in their livelihood without the fear of being sued for everything they own because of something that is beyond their control or foresight. This will lead to campgrounds to continue to operate in the future and others to invest in campgrounds for the public to enjoy nature without this encumbering fear hanging over operators' heads.

This bill, however, does not prevent campground owners and operators from being held responsible for any injuries or deaths if it happened as a direct result of negligence or purpose from the owner or operator. This includes the upkeep of warning or informative signs at parts of the campground explaining the potential dangers in the area. In fact, the campground owner and operator must post a warning sign at each entrance of the campground explaining to visitors that the owner and operator is not liable for harm resulting from risks inherent to camping.

With what I have laid out for the members of the Civil Justice Committee in regards to this bill, I hope it has the support of everyone on the committee. I am happy to answer any questions the committee might have.