



**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE DICK STEIN, CHAIRMAN**

**TESTIMONY
OF
RACHAEL CARL
THE OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, my name is Rachael Carl, and I am the director of public policy services for The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 235.

The OMA was created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers; today, it has 1,300 members. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing.

While we can all agree to the stated goal of this legislation – emphasizing safety for refinery workers, facilities, and their communities – House Bill 235 has less to do with safety and more with stripping private businesses of their ability to make their own hiring decisions and allowing the government to dictate those decisions.

Safety is paramount at refineries. These facilities want every worker entering their facility to return home in the same condition that they arrived at work. That can best be ensured with a skilled workforce, regardless of union status. Skilled, knowledgeable employees and contractors are key to safe and reliable operations.

The OMA agrees with the sponsors that we need to make sure that those working in these facilities continue to have the background and knowledge to minimize risks, but this bill does not accomplish that goal. In reality, this bill would do the opposite. In some cases, under House Bill 235, refineries would have no option but to hire workers that are less qualified and less familiar with their systems in order to meet a state-imposed quota system. This would present a serious threat to the safety of the refineries' employees and their communities.

Refineries use a thorough selection process for filling their roles. Among technical expertise and relevant experience, safety is a key factor in hiring decisions. Refineries do not take lightly the importance of hiring only the most qualified workers, whether that means hiring union or non-union workers. In fact, many refineries hire a mix of both union and non-union workers for their facilities – qualifications always come above union status.

Finally, let us state the obvious: Not only is this bill an unnecessary intrusion into private employers' rights, it's a job killer. For example, take a worker who has been on-site for five years. When House Bill 235 is fully enacted, it would require a large percentage of employed workers to go through a state-registered apprenticeship program. Currently, a vast majority of state-registered apprenticeships are overseen by unions. This long-term contract worker would have to find a union willing to accept them for training; even if they are accepted, this worker will lose seniority, benefits, vacation time, and possibly face a higher initiation fee, even though they have been at this facility and working in the field for years. If this worker is in his/her 40s or 50s, this could be devastating to their career.

As the legislature continues to pass licensure reforms and reduce barriers to employment, House Bill 235 would represent a step back for the Buckeye State. This bill would be a notable loss for the rights of private employers, as well as for workers. We respectfully ask this committee to oppose House Bill 235.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.