



*BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 86*

Good afternoon, Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 86. My name is Justin Barnes, and I am the Director of Workforce, Small Business, and Technology Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

As you may know, for 129 years, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate, and we represent over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans. As part of our mission, we seek to make Ohio the best place in the country for businesses to operate and grow.

As part of the Chamber's recently published economic competitiveness study, the *Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future*, one of the recommendations made is to address and reduce regulatory barriers that constrain economic activity and inhibit opportunities for growth. House Bill 86 allows micro distilleries in Ohio to expand their operations and increase productivity and job opportunities provided by this burgeoning industry.

While this legislation changes the production limit from 100,000 gallons of spiritous liquor per year to 1 million gallons per year, that change merely puts Ohio's laws in line with other states and keeps Ohio competitive in the market for attracting new or growing distillers. It also helps to ensure Ohio does not lose any of our great craft distillers to those other states who have increased production limits.

We want to thank Representative LaRe for his work on introducing and championing this legislation. We look forward to working with you on this proposal to ensure Ohio's craft distilleries are on a level playing field with those located in nearby states. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this legislation.