



KEY VOTE ALERT

The coronavirus has taken its toll on Ohio's economy. Over a million individuals have filed initial unemployment claims, businesses across the state have closed or severely limited their operations, and consumer spending has plummeted. For Ohio business owners, this state of the economy cannot continue because the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus is a threat to their ability to remain open.

Another risk facing Ohio business owners is coronavirus litigation alleging an employee or customer contracted the coronavirus while on their premises. These lawsuits will attempt to hold employers accountable for spreading the coronavirus, despite the fact that the risk of infection remains no matter what precautions are taken. This potential liability facing struggling businesses right now could mean businesses choose to stay closed or keep in place severe operation limits for months to come.

Thankfully, lawmakers have the ability to assist these small business owners and in turn help pave the way for an economic rebound in the Buckeye State by voting yes on Senate Bill 308.

Under Senate Bill 308, every business in Ohio as well as churches and non-profit entities will be granted qualified immunity from lawsuits alleging an individual was exposed to the coronavirus while on their premises or through the entities provision of services.

This liability protection will not exist if a business, church, or non-profit engages in reckless, willful, or intentional misconduct.

The legislation also provides additional legal protections for medical providers who were on the front lines during this uncertain time and for Ohio's manufacturers who altered their operations to produce PPE and other goods in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 308 because we believe the legal protections contained in the bill are a necessary part of restarting Ohio's economy. Mitigating an employer's risk will aid Ohio's economic comeback by removing an obstacle to re-opening and an incentive for businesses to substantially limit their operations. Likewise, Senate Bill 308 recognizes that employers should not be held liable for a risk they cannot eliminate so long as they are attempting to create a safe environment for their employees and customers.

We urge a YES vote on Senate Bill 308 on the Senate floor. Your vote will be recorded on the Ohio Chamber's *Free Enterprise Index* which is a compilation of your voting record on key pro-business legislation during the General Assembly.

If you have any questions about this bill or the Ohio Chamber's position, please contact me at (614) 629-0916 or KShimp@ohiochamber.com.

WE'RE ALL FOR OHIO.