



March 28, 2022

The Honorable Robert R. Cupp
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Speaker Cupp,

As the collective organizations representing Ohio's statewide business community, we are writing to you in strenuous opposition to House Bill 235. In short, enacting HB 235 would be injurious to our free enterprise systems and diminish the rights of employers to control their own workplaces free from excessive government interference. Forced unionization would impose costly government mandates in the hiring process and shrink the number of Ohioans who are eligible to work at an oil refinery during a time of great workforce scarcity.

By disrupting the operational decisions of Ohio's refineries, HB 235 would directly jeopardize our domestic energy production at a time when we can least afford it. Such a mandate would have national security implications while potentially leading to even higher gas prices for Ohio's families and businesses.

HB 235 goes far beyond merely ensuring minimum safety standards for construction work in refineries. In a Facebook call-to-action post, Laborers' Local 329 commented, "This bill will establish safety standards in Ohio refineries **and secure our market share**". Confidence is so high among organized labor that they are publicly revealing their intentions to force unionization at Ohio's four refineries.

The fact is Ohio's refinery facilities have long been, and remain, highly regulated at the local, state and federal levels. The industry has made significant investments in programs, training, standards, practices and equipment reliability that have improved occupational and process safety performance. In fact, there hasn't been a fatality at an Ohio refinery in over 25 years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the nonfatal workplace injury and

illness incidence rates for petroleum refineries in 2020 amounted to .5 cases per 100 full-time workers. In Ohio, the 2020 injury and illness incidence rates for petroleum and coal products manufacturing was 5th lowest of all manufacturing industries at 1.4 cases per 100 full-time workers.

No matter if it's a refinery or a lemonade stand, our government should never order any private enterprise to hire certain employees and at specified proportions. House Bill 235 would take a big step towards nationalizing Ohio's companies rather than allowing the private sector to manage its own workforce and operations.

Ohio's statewide business community stands in solidarity with Ohio's four oil refineries and recognizes their significant economic and philanthropic contributions to our state. The degree to which bill proponents have demonized them throughout this process is malicious.

We understand that some legislators may have not fully understood the damaging implications of this bill before agreeing to co-sponsor, and we do not begrudge their initial support. Please note, however, that any vote in favor of HB 235 stands in direct opposition to our organizations' missions.

With that said, it is fortunate that Ohio's legislative process is deliberative and thoughtful, providing enough time for the true purpose behind certain proposals to be revealed. We hope it has allowed you the opportunity to see through this thinly veiled attempt at forced unionization in Ohio's oil refineries, opening the door for it to further creep into other industries in our state.

Thank you in advance for putting the brakes on this runaway train. With the utmost respect, the below organizations fervently request your NO vote on House Bill 235.

Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Ohio Business Roundtable
Ohio Manufacturers' Association
NFIB-Ohio
Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
Ohio Farm Bureau

cc: All Members of the Ohio House of Representatives