



**February 15, 2022**

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## Ohio Chamber Testifies In Support of Asbestos Lawsuit Reforms

The Ohio Chamber gave proponent testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of Senate Bill 252. The legislation – sponsored by Business First Caucus Chairman Sen. George Lang – aims to stop businesses across Ohio from being named as a defendant in asbestos lawsuits without any evidence the business is responsible for the plaintiff’s alleged exposure. In our testimony, we discussed how the current practice of over-naming defendants in asbestos litigation harms Ohio’s business and legal climate because it increases operating costs for employers through higher legal bills. This practice is especially concerning to the Ohio Chamber because the most recent [lawsuit abuse survey](#) performed by the US Chamber’s Institute for Legal Reform found the **Ohio has the 15<sup>th</sup> worst legal climate in the country.**



Senate Bill 252 remains in Senate Judiciary Committee and the Ohio Chamber will continue advocating for its swift passage from committee and the Ohio Senate because the reforms included in the legislation will benefit many Ohio employers.

Click [here](#) to view the Ohio Chamber’s testimony or click [here](#) to read our written remarks.

## Ohio Chamber Member Testifies Before House Commerce & Labor Committee



[Adam Primm with the Benesch law firm](#), on behalf of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, delivered proponent testimony on Senate Bill 47 – one of the Ohio Chamber’s top 10 legislative priorities this winter. In his remarks, Adam highlighted how the legislation will provide important clarity to employers

and employees alike on what qualifies as compensable working time for purposes of overtime pay.

Under the legislation, Ohio’s overtime statute will codify a longstanding federal law principle which states insubstantial and insignificant periods of time spent working outside normal working hours does not constitute compensable working time. This change will modernize Ohio’s overtime statute to reflect the reality that more hourly employees are working from home in unsupervised settings than ever before thanks to the coronavirus. Employers stand to benefit from such change because the risk of wage and hour lawsuits spike when hourly employees have access to work materials at home.

Senate Bill 47 is scheduled for a third hearing this week in House Commerce & Labor Committee and could be voted out of committee in the coming weeks. Click [here](#) to view Adam’s testimony, or click [here](#) to read his written remarks.

## Data Privacy Bill Moves to the Ohio House for Consideration

Last week the House Government Oversight Committee referred House Bill 376, Ohio Personal Privacy Act, to the full House for a vote. House Bill 376 could act as a framework for data privacy if the federal government begins work on this important issue.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce testified in support of the legislation late last year but began working with the sponsors and other interested parties in fall of 2021 as the bill was being crafted. Our testimony on the bill can be found [here](#). Hopefully, the House will take up the measure this week and send it to the

Ohio Senate for consideration.

## Work From Home Legislation Advances Out of House Insurance Committee

By a unanimous bi-partisan vote, House Bill 447 was reported out of the House Insurance Committee last week and now awaits a vote before the full House. House Bill 447 is a top 10 priority bill for the Ohio Chamber this winter because it updates Ohio's workers' compensation law to clarify what types of risks will lead an employee who is injured while working from home to qualify for workers' compensation benefits.

Under the bill, only inquiries caused by a special hazard of a person's employment will qualify that person to receive employer paid time off and medical benefits. Creating this new definition of injury for work from home employees assures employers who have a work from home workforce are not liable for other types of injuries that are caused by risks common at home such as tripping over the family pet. At the same time, employees are still eligible for workers' compensation benefits for injuries caused by their work duties such as carpal tunnel that may arise from their work at a computer.

The Ohio House could vote on HB 447 as early as this week, so the Ohio Chamber will continue to update our members on the progress of the legislation as it moves through the General Assembly.

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