



October 29, 2019

Representative Steve Hambley
Chair, Ohio House Civil Justice Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Hambley:

We are writing on behalf of our respective organizations and our 30,000 plus business-owner members to lend our support for House Bill 355. House Bill 355 (HB 355) will provide qualified immunity from civil liability to owners of campgrounds for injuries resulting from a well-delineated and defined list of risks inherent to camping. We commend and thank Representatives Wilkin and Swearingen for introducing this important legislation promoting a common-sense civil justice system.

Businesses are faced with many costs, including taxes, insurance, utilities, as well as the costs associated with defending lawsuits. These costs can be substantial, and the Ohio General Assembly has taken many strides over the past couple of decades to create and preserve a stable, predictable legal climate in our state. Our associations have long been supportive of such efforts to provide certainty to business owners while preserving the ability of individuals to seek appropriate redress through the courts. We believe House Bill 355 achieves this appropriate balance for Ohio's campgrounds.

Campgrounds in Ohio are confronted with inherent risks given they are outdoor businesses and are subject to the whims of nature and the features of the natural world. These facilities need the protections in HB 355 to protect them from a frivolous lawsuit that could shut them down. HB 355 does not prevent justice, allowing individuals to sue for a host of different reasons including willful or wanton disregard for safety by the campground owner. Patrons are further protected as HB 355 requires posting of signage that informs patrons of the risks inherent with camping.

Several years ago, Ohio recognized the importance of the agritourism industry and extended nearly identical protections to agritourist businesses as those contained within HB 355. We view HB 355 as the next logical step to ensure Ohio's campgrounds, visited by over two million individuals last year, can continue to serve guests from Ohio and all over the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 355. We recommend passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Ferruso'.

Christopher Ferruso
Legislative Director
Ohio NFIB

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Shimp'.

Kevin Shimp
Director, Labor & Legal Affairs
Ohio Chamber of Commerce