



On Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed [House Bill 606](#) into law. House Bill 606, sponsored by Representative Diane Grendell, ensures civil immunity to individuals, schools, health care providers, businesses, and other entities from lawsuits arising from exposure, transmission, or contraction of COVID-19, or any mutation of the virus, as long as they were not showing reckless, intentional, or willful misconduct.

It also shields health care providers from liability in tort actions regarding the care and services they provide during this pandemic unless they were acting recklessly or displaying intentional misconduct.

Below are statements of support from several Ohio associations and organizations.

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“AICUO applauds Governor DeWine for signing House Bill 606 today. We appreciate his commitment to provide support to Ohio’s independent higher education sector as we continue to navigate through and respond to this crisis. We also thank the Governor and Chancellor Gardner for their collaborative efforts with our 50 member institutions since March.”

***C. Todd Jones, President and General Counsel, AICUO***

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“Local governments have been and will continue to be on the frontlines of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank Gov. Mike DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for recognizing that local officials and employees should not have to fear legal peril for their good faith actions in responding to the pandemic. The local response to COVID-19 is a multifaceted effort, and we believe this is a critical component to aid in those ongoing efforts.”

***Carl Davis, President, CCAO***

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“On behalf of Ohio’s public universities, the Inter-University Council of Ohio thanks you for your support for House Bill 606, which will provide to Ohio’s public universities appropriate liability protection from litigation arising from the coronavirus. We appreciate the action you took today to sign the bill so that it becomes law for the state of Ohio.

As you know, this is a top priority for the Inter-University Council of Ohio. Please be assured that the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff remain our top concern. With your signing of this bill today, we are now better able to provide for their safety, to operate more effectively, and to ensure our students continue to receive a quality education in this most uncertain environment.

This new law will give Ohio’s public universities more predictability about their legal challenges as they operate through this pandemic. It will help them to responsibly navigate through the unknown risks associated with the virus and the potential legal liability they may face in lawsuits alleging their actions are the reason someone was exposed to COVID-19.

House Bill 606 is vitally important to restarting our work in a way that allows us to continue to provide a high-value, high-quality education to our students in a safe manner. Your willingness to take this action today so that it will become law and establish statutory guidance for liability protection creates for us a much-needed degree of certainty.

Again, thank you for hearing our concerns and acting on them. Your support for Ohio's public universities comes across strong and clear with your signing of House Bill 606 today. It is very much appreciated."

***Bruce Johnson, President & CEO, Inter-University Council of Ohio***

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"With the signing of House Bill 606 by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, small business owners across the state can feel safer from unmerited COVID-19 lawsuits. We are very grateful to the Governor for knowing how important this legislation is to the small business community. With a recent NFIB survey indicating that 70 percent of Ohio entrepreneurs are fearful of such a lawsuit as they work to recover from the pandemic, Governor DeWine's signing this important piece of legislation into law, means there is one less thing they need to worry over."

***Roger Geiger, Executive Director, NFIB***

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"On behalf of Ohio's 23 community colleges, we want to thank Governor DeWine for signing House Bill 606 today and for his continued leadership during this ongoing public health emergency.

As students, faculty and staff return to Ohio's colleges and universities for the beginning of the fall semester, our institutions have worked diligently with state, local and campus leaders to implement safety protocols that adhere to health standards and requirements aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19.

HB 606 is a balanced approach to provide limited liability protections for our public institutions of higher education, and we applaud Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted for their continued leadership in advancing this important legislation with House and Senate leadership. By signing HB 606, Governor DeWine is helping to provide certainty to both public and private institutions of higher education as they make their best-faith effort to safely reopen by mitigating risk from unwarranted liability.

Ohio's community colleges appreciate the ongoing support from the DeWine administration and General Assembly during the Covid-19 emergency. As we welcome students and faculty back to campus at the beginning of fall semester, please know that the health and safety of our communities and those we serve has been, and will continue to be, our top priority."

***Jack Hershey, President and CEO, Ohio Association of Community Colleges***

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"Ohio's economy cannot get fully back on track unless businesses have an assurance that they will not be subject to frivolous lawsuits for operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today's signing of H.B. 606 is a profoundly important step forward in the reopening of Ohio's economy, and the Ohio Business Roundtable is grateful for the leadership of Governor DeWine, Senate President Obhof, and Speaker Cupp for working collaboratively with the business community to help put Ohioans back to work."

***Pat Tiberi, President & CEO, Ohio Business Roundtable***

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"Ohio businesses stepped up when asked to help with this pandemic crisis and we are pleased that the Senate and House, along with the governor, have acted to help protect jobs and our economy."

***Andrew E. Doehrel, President & CEO, Ohio Chamber of Commerce***

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“We are very grateful to the Governor for his signature on this critical bill. COVID-19 required significant changes to the way retailers operate. Our members have spent a great deal of time and money to ensure a safe purchasing environment for their customers. Many have gone over and above the required guidelines. As such, they deserve the immunity protections afforded by House Bill 606.

We appreciate the efforts of the legislature, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor in supporting Ohio businesses by enacting House Bill 606.”

***Gordon Gough, President and CEO, Ohio Council of Retail Merchants***

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“As we all continue to find ways to navigate through the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the certainty that HB606 will bring to our agriculture community is appreciated. We applaud the Governor and the legislature for coming together to pass this measure to help employers, including those in the agriculture sector, get back to business on a normal scale while protecting the health and safety of their employees and communities.”

***Adam Sharp, Executive Vice President, Ohio Farm Bureau***

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“Ohio hospitals appreciate the legislature passing, and governor signing, [HB 606](#), which will allow hospitals and health care providers to focus on providing the best patient care possible in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals have been called upon to lead the health care community’s response to the pandemic and HB 606 will provide them necessary protections to ensure they can continue to do so. We appreciate our state policymakers efforts with this legislation and the leadership of Representative Rick Carfagna, Representative Diane Grendell, Senator Matt Huffman, Speaker Bob Cupp and President Larry Obof.”

***Mike Abrams, President and CEO, Ohio Hospital Association***

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“The Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association (OHLA) commends Governor Mike DeWine for signing, and the Ohio General Assembly for passing, critically-needed legislation to protect Ohio’s employers and employees from the crippling economic impact of pandemic-related lawsuits. Our industry has suffered an historic setback this year, with more than 70 percent of our workforce idled and economic losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars to date. The onset of frivolous lawsuits would be an obstacle to getting our businesses back to more regular operation and bringing these employees back to work. Ohio’s hotel & lodging industry is positioned to help lead the way to overall economic recovery. House Bill 606 will help to accomplish this, by providing basic protections from the inevitable opportunistic efforts to use litigation or the threat of litigation to extract financial gain from local businesses across Ohio.”

***Joe Savarise, CTA, Executive Director, Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association***

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“The League applauds Governor DeWine for signing HB 606, which provides civil immunity protection to local governmental, including cities and villages, against coronavirus lawsuits as they perform necessary government functions in the service of Ohioans over the course of the ongoing pandemic.

Ohio’s municipalities are navigating both the continuing frontline response and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that local leaders and their employees are protected from needless, costly lawsuits as they provide the quality local services Ohioans need. The specific immunity provided by HB 606 will enable municipal employees to work on behalf of their local communities without fear of frivolous litigation.

Manufacturers across Ohio have stepped up to produce protective equipment and other supplies needed to fight COVID-19 and live our day-to-day lives. Manufacturers need the assurance that when they play by the rules and do everything possible to protect their employees and restore our economy, they have support from policymakers in the form of targeted protections from senseless, unchecked litigation.

The OMA thanks the General Assembly for passing House Bill 606, and the governor for signing it into law. This legislation demonstrates once again that Ohio continues to be the nation's manufacturing leader."

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***Eric Burkland, President, The Ohio Manufacturers' Association***

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"The Ohio Metro Chambers Coalition applauds Governor DeWine, Senate President Obhof, House Speaker Cupp, and members of the Ohio Legislature for their leadership in passing House Bill 606, which enacts temporary and targeted qualified immunity from tort liability for responsible Ohio businesses against COVID-19 related law suits. This legislation was a top priority to help our members weather the storm raged by COVID-19. Businesses are eager to regain a sense of normalcy. Jobs must be restored; businesses must safely reopen to workers and the public; the economy must gain momentum. In order to do so, responsible businesses need assurance that they will not be at further financial risk by the threat of unwarranted litigation. This bill provides that assurance. Our Chambers will continue to actively educate and encourage businesses to follow local, state, and federal safety guidelines, as well as promote best practices amongst our memberships. The business community remains committed to contributing to a safe and effective recovery from this pandemic, and H.B. 606 an integral step towards achieving that goal."

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***Ohio Metro Chambers Coalition***

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"We want to thank Rep. Grendell for sponsoring this critical piece of legislation and the Ohio legislature for its careful consideration of this important issue. We look forward to the ongoing work alongside the General Assembly and the DeWine Administration to ensure cities and villages can propel Ohio towards a strong economic recovery."

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***Kent Scarrett, Executive Director, Ohio Municipal League***

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"Ohio's restaurants appreciate Ohio's elected leaders working together to pass House Bill 606, an important and timely piece of legislation that is essential to all Ohio employers. This legislation, which Governor DeWine signed today, will help restaurants throughout Ohio more confidently take all of the necessary steps to fully reopen, operate safely, and continue to serve our communities. The Ohio Restaurant Association thanks Governor DeWine, Lieutenant Governor Husted, Senate President Obhof, Speaker Cupp and the Ohio Legislature for their tireless efforts on behalf of all Ohioans."

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***John Barker, President and CEO, Ohio Restaurant Association***

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"On behalf of Ohio's 711 public school district boards of education, I want to thank and commend the General Assembly and Gov. Mike DeWine for clarifying and confirming the need to provide immunity protections to our school districts and their employees as they make difficult and unprecedented decisions to meet the needs of Ohio's students amid the pandemic."

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***Richard C. Lewis, Chief Executive Officer, Ohio School Board Association***

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"The Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA) applauds Governor Mike DeWine for signing House Bill 606, which will expand civil immunity for health care and service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OSMA strongly advocated on behalf of Ohio physicians in support of HB 606, sponsored by Rep. Diane Grendell (R-Chesterland), since its introduction this spring. This issue has been of utmost importance to many of our members, particularly with regard to the temporary postponement of elective medical procedures pursuant to an emergency order issued by the Department of Health during the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis.

With the passage and signing of House Bill 606, physicians and those on the front lines of the healthcare system can rest assured their voices are being heard and they will be given additional protections for their heroism during these

unprecedented times. Along with the Governor, we would like to thank Speaker Bob Cupp and Senate President Larry Obhof for their leadership along with Representative Diane Grendell and Senator Matt Huffman, who worked with OSMA on advancing the legislation across the finish line.”

***Ohio State Medical Association***

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“On behalf of the 1,200 members of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), we thank you for signing House Bill (HB) 606 into law today, September 14, 2020.

In a time of uncertainty, Ohio’s educational leaders are working tirelessly so that our children can learn in safe, supportive environments. HB 606 provides additional protections for Ohio’s schools as they seek to return students to the classroom and to as much normalcy as possible.

Thank you for your sensitivity to the countless challenges our schools are facing. Your support of HB 606 is one of the many ways you have partnered with Ohio’s schools to help them navigate the unique circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

***R. Kirk Hamilton, Ph.D., Executive Director, Ohio’s Superintendent Association***

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“The Ohio Township Association appreciates the attention of the General Assembly and Governor DeWine to COVID-related liability issues. While townships are doing their best to ensure their communities are safe during the pandemic, there is no way to eliminate risk entirely. House Bill 606 addresses this and helps ensure that Ohio townships can continue to function in their new and challenging environment.”

***Ohio Township Association***

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