



A Busy and Positive First Year for the 134th Ohio General Assembly

The Ohio Legislature has had a very busy first year of the 134th General Assembly. NFIB issued eight “Key Vote” cards on the bills below, many of which were in response to the pandemic. **All were signed into law by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine.** These key voted pieces of legislation are in addition to the nearly 100 total bills we are monitoring. Additionally, Senate Bill 9 was added in the first quarter of 2022.

Senate Bill 13 - Small businesses need certainty and predictability when it comes to the legal landscape. Our members do not typically have the resources to retain in-house legal counsel, so when faced with a legal challenge it can be very expensive to combat. Senate Bill 13 brings the statute of limitations on a written contract down to six years, from eight (from 15 a few years ago). This shortened tail reduces recordkeeping and frees up resources to be spent on growing your business, not reserving for potential liability.

Senate Bill 18 - NFIB championed efforts to conform Ohio’s tax code with changes made at the federal level to ensure the deductibility of Paycheck Protection Loans (PPP). Absent the key provisions in Senate Bill 18, our members who utilized PPP would have experienced increased tax liability. Additionally, this bill addresses a change in interpretation by the Ohio Department of Taxation that subjected the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation rebates to the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT).

Senate Bills 108 and 109 - NFIB quarterly member surveys showed the economic effects of government closures and policies remained a top concern for our members in 2021. NFIB was proud to champion the use of federal stimulus dollars to provide our members with the opportunity to receive state grants. Senate Bills 108 and 109 provided over \$300 million in monies for general business, bars, restaurants, lodging, entertainment venues, and for the first-time new businesses (those that opened their doors in 2020 or later).

House Bill 2 - NFIB strongly supported the efforts to bring broadband to all Ohioans. House Bill 2 provides incentives for private broadband carriers to connect more Ohioans. The bill safeguards taxpayer dollars by requiring certain benchmarks are achieved. We learned the importance of broadband when many were working remotely. To compete in a global market, our members need high-speed internet availability.



House Bill 75 - Several positive reforms to Ohio's workers' compensation system were included in House Bill 75. The statute of limitations to file an occupational disease claim is now synced with all other types of workplace injury claims at one year. Additionally, a claimant will now need to demonstrate new and changed circumstances in a claim before refiling a request for permanent total disability. These claims result in lifetime benefits and one should not file the same application in hopes of being awarded by a new hearing officer.

House Bill 168 - NFIB led the initiative encouraging legislators and the administration to use federal stimulus dollars to repay over \$1.4 billion in loans taken to pay unemployment compensation claims. Ohio had to borrow early during the pandemic and had House Bill 168 not been enacted, employers faced an additional \$100 million in increased taxes, at a time when businesses struggled to remain in operation. Ohio has now built up a positive balance of over \$600 million.

House Bill 215 - NFIB helped craft and lead the legislative and executive efforts to see the enactment of the Business Fairness Act, House Bill 215. This bill gets the government out of picking winners and losers. In March of 2020, some businesses were deemed "essential" while others were "non-essential" forcing some, typically smaller retailers, to shutter while others, typically big-box stores selling the same wares, to be open. House Bill 215 allows any business the opportunity to meet any safety or health protocols and remain open.

Senate Bill 9 - A legislative priority for NFIB at the beginning of the 2022 calendar year, Senate Bill 9 places Ohio on the path to achieving a regulatory climate that protects public safety and welfare while ensuring our member small businesses are not overburdened. The bill requires certain state agencies to reduce regulatory restrictions 30 percent by June 30, 2025. Any agency not achieving this benchmark will be required to jettison two regulatory restrictions for each new one added after this date. An online resource will be established to allow our members to request information about regulatory restrictions and to communicate directly with the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review about those restrictions and their impacts.