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December 1, 2020

Honorable Ed Emery
Chairman
Missouri Senate Committee on Government Reform
201 W. Capitol Ave., Rm. 423
Jefferson City, MO 65101

RE: Senate Bill 1, Testimony of Associated Industries of Missouri, Senate Committee on Government Reform, December 1, 2020

Dear Senator Emery:

Associated Industries of Missouri (AIM) is Missouri's oldest business advocacy organization. Our mission is to continually advocate on behalf of Missouri businesses and their employees, and we have done so since our founding in 1919.

On behalf of Missouri employers, we want to thank you for your strong leadership in filing Senate Bill 1, a bill providing limited protection to businesses from frivolous lawsuits relating to the recent COVID-19 pandemic in certain circumstances. Associated Industries of Missouri fully supports Senate Bill 1.

Missouri businesses were asked by our state government leaders to help fight the pandemic by shifting production from whatever the manufacturer normally made to manufacturing personal protective equipment (PPE) for use by our front-line medical workers and others that were working hard to save lives and fight this terrible disease. And manufacturers across the state responded.

Some businesses remained open during the initial weeks of the pandemic because they were deemed "essential" businesses. Other employers closed temporarily and reopened. Most employers have done their absolute best to protect their employees, customers, and users of their products by following the ever-evolving guidelines and mandates issued by federal, state, and local governments.

Now, these same manufacturers, healthcare providers, retailers, insurers, educators and other employers that are trying to rebuild Missouri's economy may face frivolous lawsuits from opportunistic attorneys seeking to find a payday for themselves and their clients that have contracted COVID-19. Despite everyone's best efforts to protect themselves and others, COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease. In most cases, a person does not contract the disease due to any other person's

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malicious intent or intentional harm. Yet, we expect these attorneys may file lawsuits within the next five years seeking to get rich on the backs of Missouri's healthcare providers, educators, manufacturers, insurers, and other employers.

We need you and our other legislative leaders to help fight this threat to our economic recovery.

While Associated Industries of Missouri fully supports Senate Bill 1, we have also sent some suggested language changes to your office to fix typographical errors and to strengthen the protections afforded innocent business owners and operators and their employees. We ask you and your fellow legislators to please help protect employers and industries that are doing their best to restore our Missouri economy, educate our students, provide the best healthcare, and provide the services we all need, even as we all continue to do our best to fight this disease.

Thank you for your support of this critical legislation and please let me know if there are any questions we may answer for you or other Senators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray McCarty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small trademark symbol at the end.

Ray McCarty
President/CEO