



January 22, 2021

Chairman Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

We, the undersigned represent the Associate's Coalition Team of the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA). Members of ACT represent the backbone of the commercial real estate industry and are comprised of maintenance companies, concierge service companies, housekeeping, pest control and the plethora of other businesses that keep commercial real estate and multifamily apartment communities running. We are small, local and often family or minority-owned businesses that are proud to operate in Maryland. As such, we urge you to support Senate Bill 210.

Senate Bill 210 will create critical protections for our businesses—shielding them from the threat of lawsuits that will exacerbate the damaging effects of COVID-19. AOBA's members of all types and sizes are working hard to protect employees, customers, citizens, and everyday residents from exposure to COVID-19 in an environment often filled with incomplete and inconsistent information. Yet they are meeting each guideline and enforcing all relevant health and safety measures enacted at the local and state level.

The growing risk of opportunistic lawsuits against these organizations poses a significant barrier in our ability to reignite the Northern Virginia, Maryland, and DC economy.

None the less, businesses such as ours face liability challenges. As a result, businesses require protection from frivolous lawsuits so they can get our region back on the path to economic recovery. Without the liability protections in SB 210, we face unfounded threats of legal action that could wind up costing thousands of dollars at a time when we need every financial resource available to keep the doors open and thousands of Marylanders employed.

We ask that, In the absence of federal action, the state legislature act to shield business owners from lawsuits unless plaintiffs can prove a business willfully failed to develop and implement a plan to reduce the risk of COVID-19. We have followed the advice of public health experts and all applicable guidelines to protect the public, often at a great financial cost. We would appreciate the certainty that our businesses will not suffer more financial hardships from unwarranted lawsuits.

Please support SB 210 with a favorable vote.

Sincerely,

Members of the Associate's Coalition Team of the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington