



WISCONSIN

**Statement Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety**

By

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and

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Senate Bill 645

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, on behalf of the Wisconsin Civil Justice Council, and the members of the National Federation of Independent Business/Wisconsin, thank you for scheduling today's public hearing for Senate Bill 645 – legislation of great importance to small business, the broader business community, and for the people of Wisconsin who find themselves either a defendant or plaintiff in a civil lawsuit.

As State Director of the NFIB, I am pleased to represent nearly 10,000 small and independent business owners located all across Wisconsin. For 75 years, NFIB has been a leading advocate for our small business community promoting state and federal public policies that will encourage small business creation and promote small business growth in communities throughout our state. Civil justice reform, the subject of today's hearing, is one of those policy areas that has been a key issue and one strongly endorsed by small business.

My testimony today is also on behalf of the Wisconsin Civil Justice Council, which has its mission to promote fairness and equity in Wisconsin's civil justice system, with the ultimate goal of making Wisconsin a better place to work, to start and grow business, and to improve the quality of life throughout our state.

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The Civil Justice Council is governed by a 16-member Board of Directors, which consists of representatives from Wisconsin's leading business and professional organizations. All legislative policies of the Council are established by a process of consensus by members of our Board, a process which has resulted in our strong support for passage of Senate Bill 645.

Since 2011, the legislature has made civil liability reform a key policy priority. The reforms, enacted into law, have brought Wisconsin back into the mainstream, and have created a stable, fair litigation climate.

The complexity and high transaction costs of civil lawsuits can be especially challenging expenses for small business owners whether a plaintiff or defendant.

In fact, Governor Walker has identified lawsuit reform as a key policy initiative of his Small Business Agenda for Wisconsin because litigation costs, whether transactional or damage awards, can cripple a small business.

NFIB is pleased to support legislation that will help reduce litigation costs for small business, update civil court procedures, and help eliminate abusive discovery practices.

On behalf of our state's small business community, **I respectfully request members of the Committee to support passage of Senate Bill 645.**