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“THE LOCAL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION PROTECTION ACT” INTRODUCED TO PROTECT VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Oak Brook, IL, May 14, 2015 – Rep. Steve Chabot (OH) announced the introduction of HR 2290, “The Local Volunteer Organization Protection Act,” on May 13, 2015. The bill would amend The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 by affording the same liability protection to volunteer groups and organizations as are already provided to individual volunteers, except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or flagrant indifference to safety.

“I am proud to sponsor ‘The Local Volunteer Organization Protection Act,’ ” said Rep. Chabot. “Local non-profit organizations make our society better by fostering democratic values often in partnership with government entities, and we should protect them from having to file bankruptcy as an alternative to incurring prohibitive legal expenses based on litigation that has little or no connection to their volunteers or employees. We need to do more to protect the future of local service organizations, and this is a bill that merits the public’s trust.”

Lions Clubs International, with its unique perspective on the need for additional protections for its service clubs as well as other volunteer organizations in the United States, worked with Rep. Chabot’s office to develop the bill.

“The bill protects the important contribution that non-profit organizations like Lions clubs make in their communities,” said Scott Drumheller, Executive Administrator of Lions Clubs International. “With more than 11,000 Lions clubs and 325,000 members throughout America, Lions are addressing real needs and making a real difference through hands-on service and humanitarian projects. This bill helps create an environment that supports and encourages the valuable service that so many communities depend upon.”

The bill’s provisions would prevent the application of vicarious liability rules to non-profit organizations who conduct their activities using primarily volunteers and who did not expressly authorize a harm-producing activity in anticipation of raising charitable funds. In addition, the proposed amendments would extend governmental immunities to nonprofit organizations for actions taken at the request, or on the authority, of a government entity that would be immune if it undertook the actions itself without creating or requiring governmental immunities.

The “The Local Volunteer Organization Protection Act” also has the support of prominent U.S. volunteer organizations, representing more than 2 million of America’s community leaders in all 50 states, each of whom is dedicated to improving the lives of others through volunteer service:

Rotary International * Kiwanis International * YMCA of the USA * Optimist International
Sertoma International * Soroptimist International of the Americas * Zonta International
Ruritan National * Toastmasters International * Y Service Clubs International U.S. Area
The National Exchange Club * AMBUCS, National * Civitan International * JCI USA



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