Proposed bill could allow legal protections for businesses if someone contracts COVID-19

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Arizona state leaders are still considering legal protections for businesses during the coronavirus pandemic. A bill is making its way through the state capital that would protect businesses by blocking coronavirus lawsuits should anyone contract the virus from a business they visit.

PHOENIX - Arizona state leaders are still considering legal protections for businesses during the **coronavirus pandemic.**

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But, if the bill falls short, businesses may have to find new ways to protect themselves, and that might mean **COVID-19** waivers.

Many consumers sign waivers already like when we sign up at the gym, promising we won't sue if we get hurt. Now during this pandemic, there may be another paper we are asked to sign.

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As businesses try to bounce back, they're balancing money, safety and trying to avoid getting sued.

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"Nationally, this is something that's being talked about," said Marc Lambier, attorney with Fennemore Craig. He calls the waiver America level of legal protection.

"As a customer, you would be temporarily giving up your rights to sue the company," he explained.

A local wedding venue was asking its brides and grooms to sign waivers for the same reasons. Restaurants might follow the same path.

"What happens if through contract tracing, they realize someone was infected in my space? Do I have any protections?" asked restaurant owner, Dewyne Allen.

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Even with a waiver, it would be tough to win a COVID-19 lawsuit, proving infection origin and operator negligence, Lambier said.

In the end, these waivers may be more legal deterrent than enforceable defense.

"Businesses should also be careful because this could turn off some customers and send them away. So it's a balancing act," Lambier explained.

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Republicans chairs the proposed bill would make many small businesses feel better about reopening, and Democrats worry it won't provide protections for employees.

The House barely passed the bill last week and now it's up to the state senate.

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