



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Good afternoon Chairman Smith and members of the House Finance Committee. I am Ed Bohren and I am the CEO of the Licking County Family YMCA. I also am the current chair of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs. The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit organization that represents the 165 YMCAs throughout Ohio. We are a grassroots driven and governed organization that advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCAs and their mission.

Until the mid-1990s, Ohio YMCAs were tax exempt in all aspects of their mission work. Then, the legislature imposed sales tax on memberships, making Ohio only one of five states that tax nonprofit fitness memberships.

YMCAs are nonprofit, tax exempt organizations. Like nonprofit hospitals, YMCAs provide immense community benefit.

- In 2014, YMCAs gave over \$23 million in financial assistance to those who could not afford memberships.
- Over 29,000 volunteers donated over \$2.8 million worth of time.

YMCAs are not taxed on other programs and services, such as summer camp and fitness classes. Only memberships.

The dollars YMCAs collect from members and remit for sales tax could be used to provide more scholarships to those who cannot afford a full price membership, help more people prevent and treat chronic diseases like diabetes, and keep our membership rates lower. With dramatically increasing healthcare costs, Ohioans need incentives to get healthy and stay healthy. Let us do more of what we do best.

Ohio YMCAs ask to return to full tax exempt status, as they should be as 501(c)(3)s. Taxing memberships is inequitable and runs contrary to our organizations' nonprofit purpose. A YMCA should not have to tax a member to use a treadmill when the Y does not pay tax to purchase the treadmill.

Thank for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.