

Proponent Testimony for HB 525  
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee  
Art Falco, President and CEO, Playhouse Square  
April 11, 2018

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Art Falco and I am President and CEO of Playhouse Square, the not-for-profit performing arts center in Cleveland. I am here today to speak in favor of House Bill 525 regarding Ohio's Motion Picture Tax Credit.

According to the most recent study by Cleveland State University's College of Urban Affairs, the initial twelve projects that utilized this incentive created 1,238 jobs and yielded a return on investment for the State of \$2.01 for every dollar spent in our economy. The success of the existing tax credit for motion pictures provides a sound base upon which we can build an impressive business sector in the State of Ohio.

By expanding the legislation to include live theater, we can continue to build on the resources available to attract Broadway producers to our State.

Cleveland State is under construction to build what will be one of the country's pre-eminent film schools, right in the heart of Playhouse Square. Expansion of the motion picture tax credit will put those students to work right here in Ohio after they graduate. This educational program will be a feeder to our local labor unions. In addition to the tax credit, a skilled labor pool is a leading factor as producers determine where to mount Broadway shows.

Playhouse Square is where the Broadway tour of Hello Dolly will begin its national tour. Our three-week engagement of this revered musical lost the opportunity to have the production rehearse here, because of the lack of a tax credit. What could have been seven weeks of employment was cut to three, as the show moved this activity to New York to utilize their tax credit for live theater.

House Bill 525 would provide the tax credit producers are seeking so that Ohio can become a launch site for Pre-Broadway productions and national tours, creating jobs and returning dollars to our economy.

Part of Playhouse Square's not-for-profit mission is to help grow the economy of Northeast Ohio. We have proven success in developing a thriving downtown district, becoming a premier stop for touring Broadway and creating partnerships that make the most of community resources.

I ask you to please pass House Bill 525.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak to you today. I am available to answer any questions you may have.