

Subject: Opposed/Opposition to HB 530

March 19, 2018

Immediate Attention: State and Local Government Committee

Submitted by/witness:

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Convention & visitors bureaus do great work in generating tourism for a region. However, BEFORE an elected official can be permitted to serve on a CVB board (or even a member of an elected officials administration by appointment), a CVB should be openly and without contest, subject to the State of Ohio's "Open Record Act". First and foremost is that up to 95% of their funding is county tax money that can be assigned for other uses. No elected official, or an appointed representative, should serve on a tax funded organization board not subject to the Open Records Act.

CVB's are not above reproach either. Case in point, see Hart Productions Inc. Vs. City of Cincinnati and the Greater Cincinnati Convention & Visitors Bureau (GCCVB) in Federal Court, Southern District of Ohio. Violations of Sherman Anti Trust Act. Out of court confidential sealed settlement.

HB 530 does NOT take into account, along with being subject to the Open Records Act, private business that compete with CVB's in large cities for dates and space in municipally owned convention centers.

As a result of this competition between private business and a tax funded CVB, conflict arises and then becomes further complicated when government officials sit on these boards, that report to and are directed by elected officials. The sometimes unlimited tax dollars available to a CVB, with spending influenced by an elected or appointed government official, creates a power structure non obtainable by private business in competition with a CVB. Cities and counties also have the ability to approve or disapprove of the executive director's employment. To this day, there is conflict with the GCCVB.

See attachment "Opinion" appearing in Cincinnati Enquirer.

Note I stated that the economic impacts of the GCCVB were false and grossly inflated. The GCCVB NEVER contested, nor could they, with any rebuttal in the Cincinnati Enquirer.

This points out that Cincinnati's Duke Energy Convention Center's last expansion and proposed future expansion was accomplished or is being considered on inaccurate economic data.

I submit my opposition and unfortunately could not attend the hearing because of the short notice of a subject that is substantially more than what it appears to be. CVB's should be subject to the Open Records Act even BEFORE consideration is given to elected officials serving.

Respectfully submitted by

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<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/07/21/hotel-tax-ideal-funding-source-arena-renovation/491095001/>