



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 6, 2019

To: Chairman Oelslager and members of the House Finance Committee
From: Beth Tsvetkoff, Executive Director, Ohio Alliance of YMCAs
Re: HB 166

The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit organization that represents the 162 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.

We ask that Ohio YMCAs return to full tax exempt status, as they should be as 501(c)(3)s. Taxing memberships is unjust and runs contrary to our organizations' charitable nonprofit purpose.

A YMCA should not have to tax a youth that comes after school or during the summer to a safe place for a hot meal, or to swim, play basketball, or play chess in a teen room. Nor should we tax a senior who comes to the Y to participate in activities that help them stay healthy, active, and social.

YMCAs are charitable, nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations that are dedicated to youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Every day we take on challenges that will shape our communities' futures - challenges like the academic achievement gap, chronic disease, and social isolation.

Together with our members, volunteers, and community partners, we make our communities stronger. Like nonprofit hospitals, YMCAs provide immense community benefit. In 2018:

- YMCAs contributed over \$23 million in financial assistance to those who could not otherwise afford a membership.
- Over 32,000 volunteers donated over \$3.1 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 financial assistance to those who cannot afford to be a member and participate in programs.

Removing the sales tax would allow YMCAs to lower their rates, making it more affordable to those who are struggling financially but are too proud or even embarrassed to ask for help.

With dramatically increasing healthcare costs, Ohioans need incentives to get healthy and stay healthy. Let us be that incentive. With your support we can continue to do what we do best - change lives and continue to be a positive impact on our communities. We are so much more than a fitness center or a gym. We are a truly a cause.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

OHIO ALLIANCE OF YMCAs

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