



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

October 22, 2019

Good morning Chairman Merrin and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. My name is Beth Tsvetkoff-Lutz, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs.

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. Please see the attached list of our YMCAs that support House Bill 196.

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.

House Bill 196 would return Ohio YMCAs ask 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 member, such as a youth that comes after school to a safe place to participate in healthy activities. Activities such as swimming, basketball, or playing chess in a teen room. Or a senior citizen 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 by:

- Driving academic achievement and inspiring kids to reach their greatest potential with high quality early childhood education and before and after school support.
- Tackling our community's greatest health challenges and improving quality of life, such as leading the state in providing the National Diabetes Prevention Program.
- Ensuring access and inclusion so that everyone has a chance to succeed and belong by providing financial assistance to those in need.



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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 million worth of time.

YMCAs are not taxed on other programs and services, such as summer camp and fitness classes, only memberships. Without a membership, individuals and families are not able to experience everything that Ys have to offer.

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.

Our programs help in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases like diabetes, and obesity. Our Ys help children with special needs and weekend food programs for children during the school year and throughout the summer.

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. I am happy to answer any questions.



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Jill Kolesar, CEO, Akron Area YMCA
Molly Riley, CEO, YMCA of Ashland
Trevor Sprague, CEO
Ashtabula County Family YMCA
Jim Cowin, CEO, Cambridge Area YMCA
Tony Collins, CEO, YMCA of Central Ohio
Tim Shetzer, CEO
YMCA of Central Stark County
Paul Waldsmith, CEO
Champaign Family YMCA
Jorge Perez, CEO
YMCA of Greater Cincinnati
Tim Hilke, CEO, YMCA of Greater Cleveland
Sam Casalano, CEO, YMCA of Darke County
Dale Brunner, CEO, YMCA of Greater Dayton
Rich Seward, CEO, Defiance Area YMCA
Doug Saunders, CEO
Fayette County Family YMCA
Paul Worstell, CEO, YMCA of Findlay
Terry Gribble, CEO
Galion Community Center YMCA
Woody Fitton, CEO, Great Miami Valley YMCA
Tim Harvey, CEO, YMCA of the Jackson Area
Dick Bennett, CEO, Lake County YMCA
John Schaller, CEO, Lakota Family YMCA
Howard Long, CEO
Family YMCA of Lancaster and Fairfield
County
Ed Bohren, CEO
The Licking County Family YMCA

Jared Lehman, CEO, YMCA of Lima
Cristen Gilbert, CEO, YMCA of Mansfield
Theresa Lubke, CEO, Marion Family YMCA
Jim McMaken, CEO, Miami County YMCA
Nick Clark, CEO, YMCA of Mount Vernon
Rob O'Hara, CEO, Ohio Valley YMCA
Kim Conley, CEO, Pike County YMCA
Aaron Baumgartner, CEO, Putnam County YMCA
Steve Clever, CEO, YMCA of Ross County
Denise Reiter, CEO, YMCA of Sandusky County
Caitlin McKelvey, CEO, Shelby YMCA Community Center
Ed Thomas, CEO, YMCA of Sidney and Shelby County
Paul Weber, CEO, Springfield Family YMCA
Chris Francis, CEO
Ralph J. Stolle Countryside YMCA of Warren County
Buster Ardner, CEO
YMCA of Bucyrus-Tiffin
Brad Toft, CEO, YMCA of Greater Toledo
Tiffany Foxx, CEO, Tuscarawas County YMCA
Trevor Secord, CEO, Union County Family YMCA
Hugh Kocab, CEO, YMCA of Van Wert County
Josh Little, CEO, Wapakoneta Family YMCA
Jim Stanford, CEO, YMCA of Western Stark County
Rob Imber, CEO, Williams County Family YMCA
Gwen Sommer, CEO, YMCA of Wayne County
Tom Gasce, CEO, YMCA of Youngstown