

Testimonial for Ohio Senate Finance Committee Hearing on 5/23/19
RE: Sub HB 166, Specifically Elimination of the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit

My name is Max Eberle. I'm a Production Office Coordinator for films and commercials. I handle communication and information distribution between all of the crew departments, vendors, and various other parties during the making of a film. So I come before you today with a particularly full view of the amount of money and work that a film brings when it shoots in Ohio.

The money that gets brought here to make a film is almost never from here. It comes from LA, or New York, or overseas. But to qualify for the Motion Picture Credit, it has to be spent here, in Ohio. Just a portion of that new infusion of funds into the Ohio economy –and the local municipal or regional economies of Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, Akron, Columbus, Amish Country, etc– gets credited back by the incentive, and only AFTER the money is spent. They get absolutely nothing if they don't actually show up and cut checks and spend their money in-state.

And those checks get cut to Ohio workers. And to Ohio businesses. The state gets some of that money back directly, through cast and crew income tax (even out of town crew has state tax withheld) and through sales tax on all the things we buy and rent. We spend tens of thousands of dollars at local hotels –sometimes hundreds of thousands, depending on the size of the production; and at rental car/van/truck companies; on office supplies, or on grocery purchases (they say “a crew runs on its stomach” and they aren't joking); on catering companies and art supplies and lumber and security services and locations fees.

But even what doesn't come back directly from that first wave of film cost expenditures doesn't just disappear. All of the rest of that influx of funds from out of state is STILL HERE. It's in the bank accounts of those Ohio residents and those local businesses. It's the money they use to pay their own costs of living or operation. The crew use it to fix their car and pay their rent or mortgage or put their kids through school... to pay for plumbers or cable or medical bills or eating out after a long day or on the weekend at local bars and restaurants. Those businesses use it to buy supplies and pay commercial rent and to employ their staff, who take it home and pay their *own* income tax and cost of living.

The benefit of the incentive to an out-of-town production company is that they spend a little bit less to make their movie here rather than somewhere else. But they still have to spend it, first. And they can spend it on us, on the local crew and business –people who've lived in Ohio all their lives or moved here specifically because they'd rather be here than in some other state– or they can take that money and give it all to another state, like Georgia or Louisiana.

I've never lived in another state. I've only traveled for work a few times. And that's because I am a proud child of Ohio, and I want to stay here. I love my job, and I love being able to do it in this unique and beautiful and friendly state. I'm not some "Big Hollywood" executive with a fancy car and too much money to know what to do with. I'm an average Joe who goes to work in a t-shirt and cargo pants and works long days so that I can pay my bills. We all are.

I've seen what the incentive did when it first went into effect. I graduated from college (BGSU, an Ohio school) right before it was implemented and was lucky enough to see and *be* a part of the sustained growth in the industry that that brought. I know how useful a tool the credit is in luring that outside money into our state and employing our local crew, because I saw how limited the film work here was without it. It wasn't enough to be a living wage.

So I know that, if the incentive goes... We all go, too. And our families, and our personal impacts on our local economies for the next 20 or 30 or 40 years that we'd live here otherwise... they go with us.

Please... support the film credit. Let us grow this forward-facing industry. Let us stay and make Ohio proud.

Thank you.

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