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Testimony – Proponent Sub. HB 166

My name is Teresa Strebler and I'm here to speak about the far-reaching impact of the Motion Picture Tax Incentive. I'm a freelance set decorator, IATSE 209 member and native Ohioan. I grew up in Northeastern Ohio in a township called Edinburg, which wasn't big enough to earn its own post office or full-blown "town" status. I went to high school across from a pig farm and had friends who lived far enough away to be a long-distance phone call. Thanks to the tax incentive, I'm able to make a living working in film while attending my nephews' band concerts, throwing New Years Eve parties with my sister and helping my parents take care of my childhood home.

The Ohio film community gave me a second home and welcomed me in a way I will always be grateful for. This industry gave me a chance to learn, grow and thrive. I've worked across the country and comparatively I've always been disappointed in their crew base. Ohio has this amazing underdog spirit which makes us uniquely suited for the film industry. We're hardworking, resourceful, loyal and capable of anything because we live in a place where nothing is guaranteed. I genuinely believe Ohio has the crew and spirit to become a major film destination and I have to believe that all the work we've put in isn't going to be thrown away now.

I work directly with local businesses and the unique thing about shooting films in Ohio is that we don't have any of the traditional infrastructure that you get in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. We don't have prop houses full of furniture, art and period-appropriate kids toys, but we do have an extensive network of businesses gaining a new form of revenue through film rentals. We have local artists, restaurant supply stores, antique stores, auto body shops – all independently owned and all benefiting from the film industry. Ohio film is supporting local businesses in an entirely new way and I don't want to see them hurt by the sudden end to this industry.

If the Tax incentive is terminated, it will effectively end film in Ohio and kill a thriving industry. The Ohio crew that I've come to know as my family will be forced to relocate or start over. Ohio is my home and I have no intention of moving but I'm also not looking forward to the idea of picking up an entry-level job while working my way toward a new career. Please don't throw away these jobs and don't undervalue the Ohioans who rely on them.