

March 2, 2019

Dear Dear Chair Terhar, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Williams-

My name is Jon Sherman and I am an Associate Professor of Film at Kenyon College and a local filmmaker. I am writing to urge you to pass the SB37 bill AND to expand the tax credit to \$100 million. We are at a watershed moment for film in Ohio and the continued momentum to bring more movies to Ohio hinges on the ability of producers to be able to plan around the tax credit when they decide to bring their movies here. We have successful and growing film programs at Ohio State, Kenyon, Denison, Otterbein, Ohio University, Capital University and numerous other academic institutions across Central Ohio alone. We are graduating hundreds of film students a year who want to stay and work in Ohio but without a film business here, will have to move to Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta or other cities that have a thriving film business. We are talking about the kind of smart, creative, educated people that will make Columbus a great metropolis over the next 20 years. We need jobs for them here in Ohio.

I have an independent film that I plan to direct myself later this year and I could employ at least fifteen students as interns if I can count on getting the tax credit. This is a movie that is set in, and stars, Columbus, Ohio that will raise the profile of the city. But if there is not a tax credit I will have to shoot the film in Pennsylvania or Illinois, where I can count on the credit. Think about that for a minute...a movie about Columbus that is shot in Pennsylvania! How many films can you name that are set in Columbus? Well, there would be many if we have a thriving film business here and the film business can plan around the tax credit.

In order to bring good independent films here and have a sustainable film business, we also need to establish a project funding cap or above-the-line cap to ensure the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit program is not consumed in total or in large part by large, out of state motion picture companies, actors, producers, and directors but instead focuses on developing Ohio film and production companies and local productions of entertainment products. Otherwise the whole credit can be eaten up by one or two movies that shoot here, go away and do not create sustainability. We need to build production AND post-production in Ohio.

I hope you will consider the importance of SB37 in light of my points made above and that you can tell how important this is to higher education film programs in Ohio.

Best regards,
Jon Sherman
Associate Professor of Film
Kenyon College

