

To the Ohio State Senate:

I am a small business owner in Akron Ohio. My production company, Red Point Digital, LLC has been providing jobs and top-quality video and film production for Ohio since 2011. The growth of my company will be greatly affected by any decrease in the film tax credit program.

Because of the Ohio State Motion Picture Tax credit program, we have been involved with feature films that choose to create in Ohio. We specialize in long form documentary production but also work significantly in editing and post production for client productions who need billing in Ohio to take advantage of our tax credits. These are jobs that definitely would not be awarded to us in deference to large brand name post production companies in New York and Los Angeles. This next year, a quarter of my expected revenues are from productions based out of state specifically because of our tax credit program.

It is interesting the state of Ohio is considering junking the program entirely to help fund overall tax reductions. This is a wrongheaded approach as it is a classic example of stealing from Peter to pay Paul. What good do personal tax reductions do if you no longer have any income?

That vast majority of film work utilizes hard-working blue-collar labor. In an economic environment that begs for diversity to remain viable, it is unconscionable to destroy a massive artery to the lifeblood of an industrial sector poised to have a long-term future in Ohio for Ohioans. Small business is often cited as being the main concern for politicians as the majority of jobs are created and maintained by small business.

Please, do not destroy a vital organ of the incubation of an industry that pays good wages for hard working Ohioans and small businesses. You know the statistics. The math demonstrates that these tax credits work. There is no sane reason to stop them.

Reasons cited by both the left or the right are ignorant of reality. The left says that the money would be better spent on programs that help all of Ohio. They fail to mention that the income tax of thousands of Ohioans and hundreds of Ohio small businesses would certainly help all Ohioans. The right says we shouldn't pick winners, but I am sure that they have no problem with tax incentives when it involves industries that suit them. I am sure that we do not have time to discuss incentives that specifically target multitudes of other businesses.

To see an example of what a long-standing commitment to the film and television industry can do for the sustainability of that industry you only have to look to Pittsburgh. We will lose work and workers to places like Pittsburgh and hasten the outflow of talent and industry from Ohio.

If you want to help Ohio's workers, reduce taxes on small business and offer an increase in the Film Production Tax Credit program. That will result in more work for the independent contractors and small businesses that currently exist and the additional ones that will come to be.

It only helps Ohio for outside money that normally would never be spent in our state, to be added to our economy. Add more, not less. Help us by investing in growth. The film and television industry want to spend more money here. Large building projects are being planned. Like my company has, several others have imported talent from across the country while also fostering and training home grown talent in the media arts that historically we lost to other states.

Momentum is on our side. Fill our sails by increasing the Tax Credit Program.

Eric Vaughan

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