

BUDGET TESTIMONY

*Ohio House of Representatives – Finance Subcommittee on State Government
and Agency Review*

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Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board

Laura P. Clemens
Executive Director



Ohio Statehouse April 29, 1865- President Lincoln Repose



Ohio Statehouse April, 2015 – 150th Commemoration of Lincoln Repose

Good afternoon Chairman Faber, Ranking Member Patterson and members of the committee. I am Laura Clemens, executive director of the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB).

CSRAB was created in 1988 to renovate, operate, maintain and preserve the historic character of the capitol square. The operation of the complex is controlled by the 12 members of the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board.

The Board consists of four members representing the Ohio House of Representatives, four members representing the Ohio Senate, the Governor's Chief of Staff and three members appointed by the Governor. As you can see, there was a great deal of thought put into ensuring the needs of the Legislature were met when the agency was created in 1988. In addition to the House Clerk and the Senate Clerk, current legislative members serving on our Board are Senator Peterson who is our current chair, Senator Skindell, House Speaker Rosenberger, Representative Celebrezze, past Senate President Tom Niehaus and past House Speaker, Jo Ann Davidson.

In addition to maintaining and operating the Capitol Square Complex, CSRAB is charged with educating visitors about the history of Ohio, including its political, economic, and social development and the design and construction of the capitol building and its grounds. We place a strong emphasis on educational programming. We have become part of the community fabric in Columbus, collaborating with other cultural institutions and state agencies to share Ohio's history with the thousands of children and families that visit the Statehouse each year.

Our diverse partnerships have provided the ability to continue free, family-friendly programming such as the annual holiday festival, Civil War encampment on the Statehouse lawn, performing arts presentations, and countless educational programs. We collaborate with the Ohio History Connection to host a virtual tour of the Statehouse, including an interactive discussion that focuses on Ohio government and citizenship. The first such tour sold out and we quickly arranged a second one, reaching a total of 240 children. - Each year we commemorate the repose of President Abraham Lincoln in the Rotunda and we host an American Revolutionary War Living History Day with Battery A, a civil war reenactment group commissioned by CSRAB.

The firing of the Statehouse cannons is a highlight of this event, bringing in school groups and history enthusiasts to the complex.

One important partnership that we maintain is with the Capitol Square Foundation. Currently the Foundation assists with the funding of our educational programs. CSRAB continues to work with the Capitol Square Foundation to achieve the goal of having every school-aged child in Ohio visit the Statehouse before graduation. To this end, transportation grants are offered through the Foundation to school districts, to offset the costs of field trips to the Statehouse. Together, we set out to enrich the experience for schoolchildren, teachers and visitors by investing in the Ohio Statehouse Museum.

The Ohio Statehouse Museum's mission is to inspire the next generation of public servants who will lead our great state. The museum continues to be an integral part of our educational programming and provides countless opportunities to collaborate with K-12 schools. The museum upgrade in 2009 included hands-on, interactive activities in an open environment, increasing the visibility of the Statehouse and becoming a focal point for high-quality education for Ohio's K-12 students.

Our existing partnerships allow us to stretch our resources and ensure that the Statehouse is a place of learning for everyone. CSRAB will continue to spend appropriated funds in a legitimate, efficient and economical manner. In addition to keeping expenses as low as possible, CSRAB strives to establish new partnerships that allow us to operate, maintain and enhance the complex.

CSRAB employees are proud to work on Capitol Square and serve the governor, legislature and citizenry. As you will see in the attached table of organization our nine departments provide a wide range of services, summarized below:

Administration – Oversees agency operations including finance, human resources and security.

Maintenance – Ensures the operation and functionality of the building, including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, furniture repairs and relocating items in the Statehouse when required.

Grounds –Maintains the landscaping, removes snow and keeps the 6.5 acres of grounds litter-free. This department is also responsible for the repair, replacement and maintenance of the granite pavers, monuments, fountains and flags on the grounds.

Custodial – Cleans the 300,000 square feet of the Statehouse, Senate Building and Atrium. The majority of this work is accomplished in the evenings in an effort to respect the business of the legislature.

Communications – Responsible for working with the various departments to promote the Statehouse to the general public.

Education – Responsible for the free educational programs offered and oversees the dedicated volunteers who lead the daily tours. This department is also responsible for exhibits and the acquisition and cataloguing of art and artifacts housed in the museum and throughout the Statehouse.

Special Events - Schedules, coordinates, and breaks down the events that take place on Capitol Square. In FY16, 830 special events were held including weddings, press conferences and receptions.

Museum Shop – Operates a shop that offers Ohio made and Ohio themed merchandise.

Parking Garage – Operates and cleans the 1200 spaces, 2 penthouses and numerous stairways in the parking garage that is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

In this proposed operating budget, which was approved by our board, CSRAB requests an increase of \$305,460 in GRF. This increase covers payroll charges that will fund a succession plan. Of the 58 full time employees, 22 (38%) are eligible to retire within 5 years. The majority of these employees are in critical positions and have served CSRAB for 20 plus years. They hold vast institutional knowledge and experience related to the operations and history of the Statehouse and grounds that we want to transfer. At this juncture, it is crucial to implement succession planning to retain the knowledge of the machinery and infrastructure of the building as these employees leave. As part of this succession plan, staffing will necessarily be “top heavy” for a period of years as new employees learn and develop under the current experienced staff.

We are requesting an increase of \$254,000 in our garage appropriation authority to continue to fund major projects from the garage reserves. These projects include generator replacement,

garage renovation, chimney repairs, and the expensive granite pavement replacement. CSRAB does have sufficient cash reserves in the garage fund to cover this appropriation increase.

We also request an increase of \$75,000 in appropriation authority in our Special Events/Museum Shop fund to purchase tables, chairs, and audio equipment. CSRAB does have sufficient cash reserve in this fund to cover the appropriation increase.

In closing, we are cognizant that to keep capital expenses down in the future, we must be diligent in executing the proper preventative maintenance. The CSRAB will continue to spend appropriated funds in a legitimate and efficient manner while meeting the statutory obligation to maintain and preserve this beautiful and historic building.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight Capitol Square and our programs. We welcome the opportunity to give you a personal, “Behind the Scenes” tour of the Statehouse to show you the mechanical and other areas not accessible to the public if you would find it helpful to better understand the many challenges of operating and maintaining a building of this age and architecture.

On behalf of the Board, let me say how grateful we are for the state funding that you and your colleagues in the General Assembly provide to the CSRAB to maintain the Capitol Square Complex. These funds help ensure that the buildings and grounds are operational for the executive and legislative branches of state government and the people of Ohio – especially the tens of thousands of school children that visit the Statehouse each year.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.