



**Proponent Testimony on House Bill 531**  
**Senate Finance Committee**

Dan Sullivan, Executive Director, HNS Sports Group

November 27, 2018

Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 531, which would establish the Sports Event Grant Fund to make grants under Ohio's Major Sporting Event Grant Program.

My name is Dan Sullivan and I am Executive Director of HNS Sports Group, the organization behind the Memorial Tournament.

Ohio established the Major Sporting Event Grant Program in 2009 to assist local organizing committees in securing very large competitively bid sporting events. To qualify, an event must be projected to generate at least \$250,000 in an incremental increase in the state sales tax. Historically, the program has been funded on a biennial basis, which has proven challenging because there is no assurance that the program will be funded in out-years. For this reason, HB 531 is needed as it will create a long-term funding mechanism for this program.

In 2013, the PGA TOUR brought the Presidents Cup to Columbus and Dublin, Ohio at Jack Nicklaus' Muirfield Village Golf Club. The international professional golf event delivered worldwide telecast audience that included over 800 million households within over 220 countries and territories. Locally, the impact was measured by over 125,000 fans attending the event and over \$26 million direct economic impact generating \$2.4 million in state sales tax revenue. The fact that the State of Ohio recognized the financial benefit and worldwide exposure value through a grant of \$500,000 from the Major Sporting Event Grant Program delivered a strong message to the PGA TOUR that Ohio values the partnership.

The success of the 2013 event and the collaborative support received from the State of Ohio has paved the way for future national and international golf competitions to consider Columbus and other cities within the state. Since 2013, my organization, HNS Sports Group and our industry peers within the state have continued to work with the PGA TOUR and other golf governing bodies to learn about the possibility of bringing other significant public golf events to the State. With each conversation there is a continuous message of expectation relative to public support.

The golf event industry has experienced great success in partnering with States throughout the United States for events such as the Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup, US Open, PGA Championship and of course the Presidents Cup - Partnerships which have produced success for the participating states and the event organizers. With all that said, HNS Sports Group and its industry peers will be much more successful in attracting large national and international events to the State of Ohio if we are able to include state financial support within the upfront bid process. If House



Bill 531 is approved, Ohio will join a leading group of other States which value the impact large golf and sports events deliver to the respective States.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important topic. I ask for your support of House Bill 531 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.