**MEMORANDUM**

**To: Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee Members**

**From: Representative Bill Seitz**

**Date: March 1, 2017**

**Re: Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 32**

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Yuko and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 32.

This bill slightly revises the current law in Ohio which prohibits any casino operator or employee from being allowed to participate in casino gaming at any casino within Ohio. The legislation was suggested by a constituent who works at a casino but is prevented by current law from playing at any casino, even at those by whom he is not employed and with whom he has no affiliation. This is an issue as there are four locations in Ohio where casinos operate (Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo) and all the employees of these gaming establishments are forced to leave Ohio should they wish to play themselves. They have no choice but to patronize out-of-state casinos if they want to play *on their own time*. Interestingly, there is no outright ban on Ohio racino employees playing at other Ohio racinos, so House Bill 32 will simply put racino and casino employees on the same footing in this regard.

Under this bill a casino employee may engage in gaming activity as long as the following apply:

1. The casino operator or employee cannot participate in gaming at the facility in which he/she is employed or at an affiliated casino in Ohio.
2. The casino operator or employee cannot participate in gaming at a facility in which he/she has an interest.

This bill has already been reviewed and approved by Executive Director Matt Schuler of the Ohio Casino Control Commission. Indeed, identical legislation (SB 265) passed the Senate unanimously last year, and was then rolled into Representative Barnes’ bill, HB 172, which passed the Senate a second time, only to stall out the last day of session because of other amendments to HB 172. On February 15th of this year, HB 32 passed through the House by a vote of 94-3.

Thank you for providing me the chance to speak on House Bill 32. Should any members of the committee have questions, I am now happy to answer them.