Testimony by Gary Wycuff

 Casino Employee at Hollywood Columbus

 Before the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee

On H.B. 32

March 8, 2017

Thank you Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Yuko and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding HB 32. My name is Gary Wycuff. I am here on behalf of myself and the casino employees in our state that have been prohibited from gambling in Ohio because we are employed by casinos in Ohio. The passage of H.B. 32 is a small but necessary change that would help keep revenue in Ohio rather than driving it to other states.

About 8 years ago I took a job working at a poker room in Las Vegas. In Nevada there is no law prohibiting casino employees from gambling at any casino, even the one at which they are employed. My employer allowed employees to play slots and poker while in their free time. I am certainly not advocating that Ohio mirror Nevada, I only bring up this example to show how some states govern their casino employees. Pennsylvania law when they first allowed casino gaming in their state was similar to Ohio's. They have since changed their law to allow casino employees to gamble at casinos not owned by companies they are employed by. To the best of my knowledge all the states surrounding Ohio allow casino employees to gamble within the state they are also employed in.

 Probably the most unfair part of this law is that Ohio has multiple racino establishments where their employees cannot only go to other racinos for entertainment they can also visit any one of Ohio's 4 casinos. This law is bordering on discriminatory to all the Ohio casino employees who wish to patronize our states casinos.

It is my understanding that the Casino Control Commission has indicated support for this small change to this law and hopefully all the respected members of this committee will give this bill serious consideration.

In closing, I would like to mention that this bill was recently passed out of the House by a 94-3 vote. This same bill was passed unanimously last session by the Ohio Senate but was unfortunately unable to be taken up by the House due to time limitations at the end of the last General Assembly. I would like to thank Representative Seitz for once again introducing this small but needed change to Ohio’s casino gaming law. His hard work on this issue is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your attention to my testimony and I would be honored to take any questions any of you may have for me regarding this bill.