

May 9, 2018

Brief Testimony & Documents

OHIO SENATE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit. In lieu of not being present, I wish to submit the attached documents: Enquirer Column by Jason Williams/PX about Chris Hicks. He testified previously. And, an email secured from our public record request on the City of Cincinnati that captured an email sent by Leslie Spencer, Executive Director of the Gr. Cincinnati Sports Commission division of the Gr. Cincinnati CVB. This details the aggressive attack on Hart Productions future shows dates by the tax funded agency WITHOUT our knowledge.

The influence exerted by the Gr. Cincinnati Convention & Visitors Bureau, and its many tentacles is impossible to confront without any transparency of the use of the bed tax by those that receive it. Having government officials, elected & employed by a municipality (along with the powerful lobbies of the hotel industry and the CVB's), is impossible to combat without.

I urge this committee to bring about much needed change, transparency, ethics, and above all, honesty by insuring that there is access to allow for oversight of the use of tax money. Therefore, I reassert the request for a convention & visitors bureau to be subject to the Freedom of Information Act for the tax funding it receives when there are board members that are elected officials or their designate or members of a government administration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. S. Hart". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Michele Hochman**

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**From:** Leslie Spencer <LSpencer@CINCYUSA.COM>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 06, 2016 1:46 PM  
**To:** 'Chris Allen'; Amy Sladewski; 'bnwunc@aol.com'; Brown Walters  
**Cc:** Shelly Lewis; 'jenna.riesenberg@renaissancecincinnati.com'; 'Lisa Disbro';  
'acollinsworth@21hotels.com'; 'kendra.fischvogt@hyatt.com'; Carla Ballard; 'Cheryl  
Schmitt'; 'Cheryl Schmitt'; 'Kathy Ehlman'  
**Subject:** RE: LEAD - ASC CINCY '18 RFP responses  
**Attachments:** 1THS000.pdf; 20151230140154706.pdf; 44508All Star Challenge\_11.2018\_tentative room  
block bid form.pdf; 44507THS proposal.pdf

Hi Chris and Amy,

Please see attached completed signed proposals (Millennium, Embassy, 21C Museum, Renaissance) for the 2018 Cincinnati All Star Challenge.

- The Hilton Netherland Plaza would like to wait until closer to date to determine a block.
- Hyatt Regency is out of doubles - would you like a block of kings from them?
- Embassy is the only NKY Riverfront hotel I heard from but you have used Marriott RiverCenter and Holiday Inn Riverfront on this event as well so I have cc'd Kathy Ehlman from NKY CVB to request proposals from both.

I will need a copy of all counter-signed hotel contracts as it is a county booking policy since the center is owned by the county. Upon receipt from you, I will submit with the signed center contract to secure the center space for Brown. Why are we booking this out so far in advance? To not lose the center space to the Hart's Holiday Showcase, who went to City Hall this past fall to try and take this space away from Brown, but failed this time around. We will need to look at locking down and signing 2019/2020 probably this year too in order to protect this space from the Hart's trying to secure it again as he is a determined business man. I just want to protect one of my longest annual cheer events from losing out to a local holiday flea market.

Happy New Year,

Leslie Spencer  
Executive Director  
Greater Cincinnati Sports Corp  
CincySports.org  
513.290.1079 Cell

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**From:** Chris Allen [mailto:Chris@THSweb.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2015 11:54 AM  
**To:** Leslie Spencer  
**Cc:** Amy Sladewski  
**Subject:** LEAD - ASC CINCY '18 RFP

Good Morning Leslie,

COMMENTARY

# Gov't watchdog: 'I'm your worst nightmare'



**Politics Extra**  
Jason Williams  
Cincinnati Enquirer  
USA TODAY NETWORK

**Chris Hicks** gives hope to everyday citizens who are fed up with politics.

The Union Township accountant is on the GOP primary ballot out in Clermont County. Who knows if the rookie candidate will win the county auditor's race against long-time incumbent **Linda Fraley** on Tuesday. Maybe it doesn't matter.

Hicks has already won. He has rocked the county's Republican Party to its fat and happy core, maybe changing it for good. Hicks' government watchdog work the past year has led to the most powerful political figure in ruby-red Clermont County getting kicked out of public office.

And all it took was being a massive pain in the butt.

"I'm a relentless, annoying, pain in the a-- to people who are trying to hide something," Hicks told *Politics Extra* over coffee. "If you're giving me some bull--- rope-a-dope, I'm your worst nightmare."

He ain't lyin', folks.

Commissioner and county GOP Chairman **David Uible** is nowhere to be found on the primary ballot. In March, Hicks found a discrepancy in

the petitions Uible filed to run for re-election. It effectively reduced the New Richmond buffalo farmer to a lame duck commish for the rest of 2018. It also capped Hicks' quest to hold Uible accountable for seemingly every breath he took.

Last summer, Uible tried to be secretive about his efforts to land FC Cincinnati's practice complex. Hicks found out and started demanding transparency — sending the commissioner almost daily emails, showing up to board of commissioners' meetings and posting minutes-long videos on YouTube.

Uible apparently couldn't handle a constituent constantly asking questions and demanding transparency. *Boo-froggin'-hoo*. Uible made an unprecedented and boneheaded decision to file a restraining order against Hicks, banning him from the commissioners' meetings.

Hicks is annoying as hell. But annoying isn't a felony. He didn't do anything wrong. Hicks kept his cool.

The commish later dropped the restraining order, but Hicks wasn't done.

It motivated him to rally a group of county GOP leaders to vote against endorsing Uible in the primary before the petition issue was discovered. It was the first sign Hicks might be able to change a party long mired in the status

quo. The efforts motivated Hicks to run for auditor, a watchdog role he says fits his passion for government transparency.

"People like David Uible assume, with pressure, you're going to go away," Hicks said. "My friends call it the 'Hicksperience' — I just keep taking a half-step at a time, and trust I'm going to break through and the people who are trying to hide stuff will eventually fall. They can't intimidate me."

Hicks, 52, grew up in Mount Washington. He was raised mostly by his mom and grandmother, both strong-willed. They taught the kid to take a stand for the conservative principles they preached.

Hicks went to McNicholas High. In the mid-80s, he remembers a group of nuns organizing students to go down to Fountain Square to protest against President **Ronald Reagan** and his foreign policy. Hicks and six buddies decided they'd counter-protest.

"It ended up like a pro-Reagan event," Hicks said. "We were all like Alex P. Keaton, Ronald Reagan-type Republicans. I've always been the same."

Hicks, a global management consultant whose clients include IBM and Samsung, didn't get too involved in politics again until a few years ago. Things started to change for him in

2011, when a group of friends were visiting Hicks and his wife. Someone complained about how her kid's Catholic school wasn't teaching better note-taking skills. Hicks told her to look at the curriculum to see what was being taught.

But the Archdiocese of Cincinnati didn't make its curriculum public then. It fired up Hicks, and he rallied parents to eventually persuade the archdiocese to be transparent with curriculum.

Through his school transparency work, Hicks met state Rep. **Tom Brinkman**. He sees Brinkman as a "regular guy" who keeps his campaign promises and doesn't compromise his conservative beliefs.

Hicks sees some of those regular-guy qualities in President **Donald Trump**.

"I had a liberal friend ask me, 'If you're all about honesty and integrity, then why do you support Donald Trump?'" Hicks said. "It's because there aren't two Trumps. He's like your uncle. He speaks his mind. He's the same guy behind closed doors as he is in public."

*Politics Extra* is a column looking inside Greater Cincinnati and Ohio politics. Follow Enquirer political columnist Jason Williams on Twitter @jwilliamsncincy.