

## TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF THE OHIO TAX INCENTIVE

Hello. My name is Leyna Haller, and I am speaking today as a member of the Ohio Film Community. I work in the art department on movies. I help create the environments in which stories are told on film.

I think many people are surprised to learn that there is a significant film crew base here in Ohio. It's not really the place you think of when you think "movie making". When I encounter someone, whether it's a vendor we're renting some furniture from or someone who has opened their home for us to use as a set, while I'm on a movie and they ask where I'm from. I gladly say "I live in Cleveland." The typical reaction I get to this is amazement and a bit of pride.

I was not born and raised here. I chose to move to Ohio in order to go to college. After college I began to work on films and fell in love with the filmmaking process. Certainly, as a fledgling set dresser, I was enticed with the prospect of moving to Los Angeles or New York. Ultimately, I decided to stay here in Ohio.

I choose to stay here for the people that I work with. I have the pleasure to work with a group of people who are warm, creative and hard working. I've worked in Columbus and Cincinnati as well as my home of Cleveland, and the crews are terrific all over the state. Every film I work on presents challenges. There are a lot of moving parts on a film shoot, many departments with many people working in concert with each other, depending on each other. However, I know that I can overcome any challenge I face on set with my coworkers.

I'm proud of the people I work with. They embody the celebrated "Rust Belt" work ethic, the ability to put their head down and get the job done, and done well. Anyone I've worked for who has come from other parts of the country have praised us for our hard work and dedication. I've had department heads from out of town tell me that we are some of the finest that they've worked with. And the best part is that they tell anyone who is coming here to work that yes, there is good crew here. Don't worry, you'll be taken care of. We are competitive on a national level. Some of us even have had the opportunities to work elsewhere, but we ultimately call Ohio our home.

I've been working on films in Ohio for long enough to see the positive impact the incentive has had. The crew base has grown and has excelled. Some of us have been able to take on more responsibility on bigger projects. I myself have been able to work my way up through the ranks in my department. I've also been able to pay off debt and buy a car. Others I know have been able to buy houses or start families here in Ohio.

Without the incentive, the movies will find other places to film. Ohio has a lot to offer, but so do Pennsylvania, New York, Georgia, and Louisiana. Without the films coming here, this community will have to make hard decisions about how to continue. Many of us will move to other states and make new places our homes. The talent here will leave. The talent pool that we've built here, will diminish or worse: vanish.

If you take away one thing from what I've said, I want you to remember that we are a community that works in Ohio and lives in Ohio. These are my colleagues, my friends, my home. The incentive makes it possible for us to grow and thrive. I ask that you uphold the incentive and keep the work in Ohio.

Thank you for your time.