 **Department of Dance, Drama, and Film**

Hill Theatre

Kenyon College

Gambier, Ohio 43022-9623

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My name is Jon Sherman and I am an Associate Professor of Film at Kenyon College, Vice President of the Board of a Film Columbus and a local filmmaker. I am writing to urge you to preserve the Ohio Film Tax Credit. We are at a watershed moment for film in Ohio and the continued momentum to bring more movies to Ohio hinges upon the ability of producers to be able to plan around the tax credit when they decide to bring their movies here. For the last three years, I have been working with CAPA here in Columbus to create a new film fund called Columbus Pictures. Columbus Pictures will fund movies that are either set in Columbus or bring some kind of economic impact to Columbus, in the form of jobs, exposure for the city, etc. The establishment and success of Columbus Pictures hinges upon whether we keep the Motion Picture Tax Credit. We are also working with Good Deed Entertainment, a company that moved from Los Angeles to Ashland, Ohio to make movies in Ohio. That company will have to leave if we eliminate the tax credit, taking all of its jobs with them.

The first film from Columbus Pictures will be an under $1 million independent film that I plan to direct in October. Contrary to popular belief, the movie and tv in my film will not be taking exorbitant “Hollywood” salaries but will instead be paid by the rules of SAG Schedule F, or $65,000 – well, well under their standard fees. They are doing the movie because they loved independent films want to make this movie here. This is a movie that is set in-- and stars -- Columbus, Ohio and that will raise the profile of the city. But if there is not a tax credit I will have to shoot the film in Pennsylvania or Illinois, where I can count on the credit. Think about that for a minute…a movie about Columbus that is shot in Pennsylvania! How many films can you name that are set in Columbus? Well, there would be many if we have a stable and growing film business here and film producers and directors can plan around the tax credit.

We have successful and growing film programs at Ohio State, Kenyon, Denison, Otterbein, Ohio University, Capital University and numerous other academic institutions across Central Ohio alone. We are graduating hundreds of film students a year who want to stay and work in Ohio. I could employ at least fifteen students as if I can count on getting the tax credit. But without a film industry here, these students will have to move to Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta or other cities that have a thriving film business. We are talking about the kind of smart, creative, educated people that will make Columbus a great metropolis over the next 20 years. and We need jobs for them here in Ohio.

Film is thriving in Ohio and we are gaining momentum fast. I just returned from New York City, where I met with a number of filmmaker friends who want to bring their projects to Ohio. “Hillbilly Elegy” was only able to shoot a small portion of their $35 million film because we didn’t have enough money left in the tax credit pool. We are fighting not only to preserve the credit but also expand it as film production and television content will be one of the great drivers of 21st century technology businesses. It’s just plain crazy for Ohio to miss out on these economic opportunities.

I hope that you can see that I am not only personally invested in bringing more film and television production to Ohio but that the future livelihood of Central Ohio film students and programs depends on it.

Thank you,

Jon Sherman