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Proponent Testimony for HB 162, HB 166
Senate Finance Committee
OHIO MOTION PICTURE TAX CREDIT
Written by Michael G. Faddoul
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Distinguished Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Michael G. Faddoul. I am a resident of Brecksville, OH- represented by House Representative Phillip M. Robinson, Jr., of District 6, as well as Senator Matt Dolan, of District 24.

I humbly write to you today, requesting your support for the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit. I am an actor, photographer, and small business owner in the Greater Cleveland area. I am Ohio born, raised, and proud. My father, Ghazi J. Faddoul, emigrated to Cleveland in 1976 to flee a civil war raging in his home country of Lebanon. Determined to create a better life for his family, he earned a bachelor's degree from Cleveland State University. He went on to become a Development Agent for Subway Restaurants and opened the first Subway in Cleveland in 1985. For more than 30 years, my father has contributed to Ohio's economy, culture, and work force. With his development office helping to open over 100 locations in Northeast Ohio, the impact is evident. My father volunteered and donated food and support to many charities and causes over the years (March of Dimes, Ohio Department of Chiefs of Police, Fraternal Order of Police, Firefighters, etc). He coincidentally sponsored a video production that the Cleveland Browns created, called, "Masters of the Gridiron." Performing stunts, Richard Fike, was a recipient of my father's support. Mr. Fike has gone on to create and coordinate stunt work for major motion pictures across the state of Ohio, allowing for the film industry to grow and thrive here. While not to claim any credit for Mr. Fike's own merits and accomplishments, my father was simply contributing to others- ultimately continuing to contribute to Ohio. Ironically, nearly three decades later, I crossed paths with Mr. Fike while pursuing stunt training. Imagine my disbelief when he remembered my father's name, and how much it meant to him all those years later. It sounds like a Hollywood film script, but it's real life. Real and meaningful.

You may be asking yourself what all of this has to do with the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit. The answer is simple. We are all intertwined. Did my father know what Richard Fike would go on to accomplish in the Ohio film industry decades later? No. Did Mr. Fike imagine what he'd be contributing to his state, to Madison Ohio, and to the local film industry? You'll have to ask him. My point is this- we all have the ability to support and positively impact one another in this life. The Representatives of Ohio's 133rd General Assembly have the ability to positively impact the growth and success of our great state, and more importantly, our great people! The decisions that we make today impact the lives of current and future Ohioans, and beyond. Our decisions don't always yield immediate results. Sometimes they simmer for decades until the timing is right. Just as Mr. Fike was able to use support from people like my father to build a respectable career for himself and his family, so too

can Ohio's film industry use the support of The Ohio Legislature to build a sustainable and thriving film industry in Ohio.

Who am I, Michael Faddoul? I graduated from Loyola University of Chicago with a BBA in Finance. Upon graduating, I came back to the state I love, during the economic recession in 2007. I supported my father's business, and along with my siblings, I helped to continue the work that my father started. My family and I have employed thousands of employees over the last several decades, positively contributing to a city and state that we love! We have paid all of the various expenses and taxes associated with running multiple businesses, in addition to our own personal tax burdens. Moreover, we supply wages that are invested into our state and local businesses and communities. We are drivers of our economy, like so many other great Ohioans across our state. The Ohio Film Industry can do the same on a much larger scale- one that has the potential to provide jobs to current Ohio residents, new tax dollars to our state, and an industry that can only add to the creativity and ingenuity that already makes Ohio so great. You've all heard the numbers in regard to the ability of film and television productions to positively impact our state. My intent is to allow you to hear one voice among many and to help demonstrate just how much of an impact this industry can and will make for Ohio.

Once again, I'm an actor. I discovered a path to pursuing my childhood dream while I was running multiple restaurants in my family's business. Slowly, the film industry has been growing, and I've been able to partake in multiple productions in the Cleveland area over the last 9 years. Had there been no tax incentive in 2010, thanks to the Greater Cleveland Film Commission, I would have not stumbled upon a path towards my passions. While still running my businesses, I pursued avenues whenever I was free to train and educate myself in the art of acting. I invested in local acting schools, training, and so many of the other various businesses that a film industry supports:

- photography
- talent agencies
- casting agencies
- local theaters
- local restaurants
- local small businesses

When I realized that my ambitions in acting could no longer coexist with my business obligations, I retired from the restaurant industry to focus on acting full time. I found my calling, and will continue to pursue it. I founded a non-profit organization, The Cleveland Actors' Studio, which operates as an approved 501(c)(7) entity. I volunteer my time and energy to bring actors together to pursue their career goals in the film industry. We engage in social gatherings, donating to and frequenting local businesses, film festivals, and other art related activities. Our members gather in the Cleveland area from as far as Youngstown and Wooster on a weekly basis. We are a therapeutic outlet for creative individuals to find direction, connection, and fulfillment. Many actors in Ohio have the same plight- we work full-time and part-time jobs to make a living, while pursuing our passion of acting in our spare time. For the determined that are able to sustain such a structure over time, there are limited opportunities in Ohio. In order to find work, actors are oftentimes left to search outside of our state's borders to grow and thrive in a field that they love. Without a year-round industry in place, those with a passion for the industry have no choice but to relocate. Many of us work in jobs and careers that have a far reach across our state. In addition to my acting ambitions, I'm currently opening a photography studio in Cleveland. Photography is another passion of mine- like in acting, I wish to express and share my art with others, to entertain, uplift, and inspire. We need these types of positive outlets in our lives as a population. A population without excitement and satisfaction will never be at rest. Simply put, if the film industry in Ohio dies- thousands of Ohioans- actors, crew members, stunt performers, casting agents, hair and makeup artists, tailors, producers, film students, teachers, university departments, and onward- will be impacted. With no film industry in which to exercise our skills and make a living, we must either change industry, or seek work where a film industry is

thriving. If I have to leave the home that I love, I take my talents (both artistic and business) with me for the benefit of another state and population. That is a loss of tax dollars, individual spending, and small businesses at the least. Multiply my example by thousands of other Ohio citizens, and the impact goes far beyond simply an industry. We are all intertwined. The future of Ohio is a bright one. We are known for our spirit, resiliency, creativity, and innovation. I hope that you, the elected men and women of our great state, will deeply reflect and consider the beauty and opportunity that a thriving film industry can create for all of Ohio.

I love Cleveland and I love Ohio. I want nothing more than to help Ohio prosper.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
May God Bless Ohio, and may God Bless America!

Respectfully Yours,
Michael G. Faddoul