

May 20th 2019

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tony Evanovich. I was born in the city of Parma and have lived in the state of Ohio my entire life. I work full time in the film and television industry as an assistant director, however this has not always been the case.

Growing up my family owned a roofing company and being my parent's only son, I was brought up in the business to one day own and operate it myself. After spending year after year operating this business I found myself unhappy. I didn't enjoy life, I didn't enjoy what I was doing day after day. I began different treatments that weren't helping, I was still depressed, gaining weight and many of the medications used to treat my condition clouded my mind and made it even harder to work hundreds of feet off the ground and around machinery.

During my recovery I set out on a mission to try new things and focus on what made me happy. It was a long and lonely road that eventually led to finding myself as a background extra on the set of Marvel's "Captain America: The Winter Soldier". I had always loved watching movies and escaping into the stories they told but this was different. Experiencing all of the moving parts being put into place, seeing the hundreds of people buzzing around set; I was addicted. I attended the Cleveland premiere of the film months later and while sitting there in a dark theater, watching the finished product; that was it, I was in love; I had a new mission.

No one in my family has ever worked outside of the family business. My family did not agree with me wanting to start out on a new venture and leave the family business behind. It wasn't easy but I needed a change and I wasn't going to give up. I was 28 years old starting at the bottom of an industry I knew absolutely nothing about. I didn't know these people, I didn't know what I was doing, but the timing was right. Ohio film was booming and I was bouncing from production to production trying to find my place in the film community.

Fast forward to today, I am a union qualified Assistant Director. I know these people, I know what I am doing, I am one of those people putting things into place and buzzing around set. I am helping train and bring other Ohioans into this industry. Helping them achieve their goals and working towards a career in film. None of this would have been possible without productions bringing their work to Ohio. Without a motion picture tax credit, none of this would have happened and I don't know where I would be today.

In the past year I have spoken to many people who live in states that previously offered a motion picture tax credit. Some have taken jobs outside of the film industry and some are moving away from home to continue doing what they love. Their lives have changed and it's due to their state eliminating the incentive. If Ohio chooses to pass this new budget and eliminate funding for the motion picture tax credit, my life and the lives of thousands of Ohioans will change.

I wake up every morning with the thought that this may all go away. That everything I and other Ohioans have worked for might change. Do I leave Ohio? Do I return to the family business? How do I continue to support my family? Will this effect my health? All of these questions will be answered by people who don't know who I am, people who don't know my face. These people are the lawmakers of Ohio.

I am just one of many who will be impacted by this new budget. This decision will change lives not only for people currently working in film but also those who aspire to join us. Students or people taking classes or going through training at Ohio schools will never get the chance to experience film at home.

I believe in Ohio film and it's positive impact not only on the economy but in local communities as well. I have witnessed it, I am a product of it. Why are we choosing to eliminate such a massive part of the economy in Ohio?

Along with this budget there are new bills proposing we raise the film tax incentive instead of eliminating it completely. These bills if passed would create a steady flow of work for Ohioans as well as money being spent within Ohio throughout each year. These bills were written for a reason, we know that productions want to set up shop in Ohio, we know that people want to invest in the state and build studios and be part of a growing infrastructure. Most importantly, passing of these bills would not only keep jobs and money in Ohio but would allow thousands of people to still call Ohio "Home".

I hope that this tiny fraction of my story does not fall on blind eyes or deaf ears but on law-makers looking to better the lives of fellow Ohioans. Please vote against this newly proposed budget and instead vote to film alive in the state of Ohio.

Thank you for reading.

Tony Evanovich
Assistant Director and Producer