

After graduating from the University of Cincinnati, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. Luckily, my husband has always had a single goal, to work in movies. This is lucky because as a wayward college grad, I was able to tag along on his single-minded journey to break into the film industry, thus giving me direction when I needed it. My first film job was as a Production Assistant on *Miles Ahead* with Don Cheadle, which started shooting in 2014. I was excited about the possibility of seeing a movie star, but after twelve hours of standing on a street corner seeing absolutely nothing, the novelty quickly wore off. I hated being a PA (as everyone who works as a PA does) and luckily only had to do it once more before moving to the Production Office, where there was heating, air-conditioning, and normal-ish hours. I stayed in the office for several films, working my way up from PA to Production Manager and while this role suited me better, it still wasn't a perfect fit, so I kept looking.

Finally, in 2017, I had the opportunity to do what I really wanted, to work as a Still Photographer. On set, a Still Photographer will take behind-the-scenes photos to be used for marketing and to document the production. I had first learned of the job while working on *Miles Ahead* three years earlier, when I saw the film's photographer in action, a Cincinnati-native named Brian Douglas. Having worked with Brian on *Miles Ahead*, *Carol*, and *A King of Murder*, I reached out to him for advice about pursuing on-set photography and have since found a valuable and supportive mentor. Since shooting that movie in 2017, I have gone on to shoot several more films as a Unit Still Photographer and I have joined IATSE, the union for film crew. Meanwhile, in the five years since *Miles Ahead*, my husband has joined IATSE as a Digital Imaging Technician, a jump which can take aspiring DITs as many as ten years to complete, he has also qualified for IATSE's health insurance based on his number of hours worked, something even New York and LA-based film crew members have trouble achieving. This ascension was only possible because of the Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit, here prospective film crew can break into an industry that might normally push them aside.

I tell you this not to brag about our good fortune, but our lives that the state of Ohio encouraged us to build by instituting the Motion Picture Tax Incentive are now in jeopardy. I have heard representatives say that the incentive doesn't create 'long term employment, only temporary jobs' and that the \$40 million allotted for the incentive would be better served if it were spread to other causes like Ohio schools or cleaning up Lake Erie. Other representatives want to pass an income tax cut for residents whose income is less than \$88,000 and the \$40 Million incentive could be used to make up for that cut. But as one of the residents who would benefit from said tax cut, I would choose Film Tax Incentive instead. Not just because I work in the industry it supports, but because it makes our state better. \$40 million spread between the 3,592 public schools in Ohio gives each school roughly \$11,000. That money can be used so much more effectively in building an industry that can grow in the state for decades, attracting new residents, giving college graduates a reason not to move out of state, and creating new jobs and businesses that don't yet exist. We cannot simply cut a valuable program because we want to use the assigned funds, this kind of action is the reason schools now need additional funding. And if our schools and our tax incentive both need money,

then we should not be considering a tax cut. As residents we should all be willing to do our part in order to help our state and our fellow Ohioans succeed. The short term gratification of lower taxes should not outweigh the long term benefit of a diverse and evolving economy AND well-funded schools AND a clean Lake Erie. We cannot continue to expect to get everything for nothing, schools cost money, clean water costs money, firefighters and police cost money, and a thriving, diverse economy requires investment from the state. As a taxpayer and lifelong resident of Ohio, I urge you to think of everything we sacrifice in accepting a tax cut.

To the representatives' claim that the incentive has not created long term employment, myself, my husband, and the hundreds of other Ohio-based film crew members have 7+ years of work on our resumes that we would like to submit as evidence to the contrary. I have a career because of Ohio's tax incentive, I've been able to buy a house because of the incentive, I have healthcare because of the incentive. All of Ohio's film crew members have been able to stay in Ohio rather than moving to New York or Los Angeles, we have built lives here, we have had children here who will grow up here and decide whether or not to stay here, we have convinced non-locals on film sets to move here and watched people move here with no convincing at all. The life of a film crew member is not a typical one, representatives who are not familiar with the film industry may not understand our unique kind of employment. Typically, we work on a project for 3 months and have several weeks to a couple months off before we start another project. Some representatives may think this schedule means we have it pretty easy, but for the 3 months in which we work on a project, we average 850-900 hours of work. In this year alone, from January to today, my husband and I have each worked 1,200 total hours on just two projects. This is serious, demanding, and ongoing work, you wouldn't say that a teacher doesn't have a 'longterm' job just because they have three months off each year, so why should our profession be any different? I understand that your constituents like the sound of a tax break and I understand that cutting programs is the easiest way to make that happen, but you were elected to do what's best for the state. You wouldn't let your kids eat candy for dinner every night no matter how badly they wanted to, even if they kicked and screamed for a little while you would know that a nutritious meal is what's best for them and in the future they will benefit from being happy and healthy.

To the claim that there is no measurable return on the incentive, I would say that even if just 200 people (this is just for the sake of argument since there are in fact over 3,500 Ohio crew members) who are employed as a direct result of the tax incentive buy a \$200,000 house in Ohio, that represents a \$40 million investment in the state's housing market. Those 200 people will also go out to eat at local restaurants, shop at local stores, raise families in Ohio towns, and that's just the local Ohio crew. When non-local crew comes into the state for a movie, that's just as many people staying at hotels, eating out, and otherwise spending money in Ohio. While giving money to schools and environmental causes is important, the Motion Picture Tax Incentive is an investment that actually experiences returns. There is no return on school funding, no money pumped back into the state by cleaning up Lake Erie, but with the incentive, the state's investment is paid back to the local vendors in the places where the incentive is being

used. With the current allotment of \$40 million dollars, the state is bringing in four to five films a year, which provide enough just enough jobs for the existing crew, if you are truly concerned about creating more jobs, your goal should be to increase the incentive, not to eliminate it. With twice the amount of funding, Ohio could film twice as many movies, employ twice as many people, attract twice as many people to move here because we would have a need for double the amount of current local crew, not to mention that there would be double the amount of in-state spending. It is important to remember that while spending increases greatly when a film is shooting in the state, spending is still increased when there is no movie filming in the state because the tax incentive has brought in hundreds, if not thousands, of residents who would not be here otherwise, residents who continue to contribute to the economy even between films.

I know that politics (and money in general) are complex and that no one idea suits everyone, but I also know that whatever expands the opportunities for economic growth and job creation in the state is good for everyone. The film industry is no different than the Ohio-based companies of Kroger, P&G, Smuckers, or General Electric and shutting the film industry down would be no different than say, shutting down the GM plant. Ohio has prospered while many other Midwestern states have experienced economic crises, I believe this is because of our history of adaptive and diverse enterprise. The more attractive our state is to any major enterprise, the more jobs become available, the more the average income rises, the more residents can spend, the more our state grows, the film industry is such an enterprise and should be appreciated for the incredible potential it demonstrates and continues to have going forward. I urge you to support the Motion Picture Tax Incentive, it is an initiative that provides provable positive results for film crew, Ohio residents, and the economy. Ohio is a great place to live, but there are many great places to live, set our state apart by recognizing the value of the film industry and maintaining the tax incentive. I don't want to have to leave my state and my family in pursuit of my career so please, don't make me.