

Ohio General Assembly

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HB 168 Sponsor Testimony

Good afternoon Chairman Edwards, Vice Chairwoman Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch and members of House Economic and Workforce and Development, for hearing HB 168. HB 168's goal is simply to support our citizens in need with existing funding, with the funding we have available. The areas of focus for this proposed legislation are new businesses, small businesses, local fairs, indoor entertainment venues, child care providers, and veteran's homes. I will be speaking on the portions involving Small Businesses and Entertainment Venues.

In supporting our new businesses, we propose \$10 million in funding support to businesses that were not eligible for previous business grants. This is a new program formed during the pandemic, and will begin providing the assistance for business started on January 1st, 2020. These businesses have been very unlucky to miss out on previous rounds of funding assistance due to businesses required to have operated in 2019 to be eligible. Additionally, we are proposing a \$150 million to continue relief for small businesses from the 2019 and prior eligibility. These business were previously eligible for \$125 Million in funding, but due to need, many businesses did not receive the assistance they applied for and capable to provide essential assistance in the form of a one-time grant. We believe the new, and small business grants will bolster our state's businesses during this difficult time, and help provide economic security in the post-pandemic economy for critical small businesses. These grants will be allocated from existing funds, as tax revenue from 2020 has seen an unexpected increase, with needs remaining from previous and new small businesses that should be supported. It is paramount to use our money to make an investment in our communities, and help our constituents have the support their government is capable of providing.

One of Ohio's cornerstone industries that has suffered greatly during the pandemic are indoor entertainment venues. In this proposed legislation, we would allocate \$20 million to support our theaters, and entertainment venues; with grants of \$10,000, \$20,000, and \$30,000. Saving our stages is not only important to our state's economy, our local theaters and music venues are a source of pride and culture for our communities. Commonly I hear from my constituents that they cannot wait to return to their favorite venues, and with this assistance we can help ensure their venues have not disappeared.

Thank you Chairman Edwards, Vice Chairwoman Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch and Members of House Economic and Workforce Development. Representative Loychik and I would be happy to take any questions.