



STATE SENATOR BILL DEMORA 25th District

Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of Senate Bill 221. This legislation would prohibit universities from entering into exclusivity deals with streaming services for sporting events and require universities to provide enrolled students with free access to broadcasts of any university athletic event.

As everyone here knows, Ohio State football reigns supreme in Columbus. As the Ohio Senate's resident super fan, I take access to college athletics very seriously. That is why I was very upset when the Big10 network entered into an exclusivity contract with NBC.

And last October, when Ohio State played Purdue, we saw the consequences of the Big10's greed. For the first time since 1997, the Buckeyes were not on traditional TV. People were unable to watch unless they bought a subscription, bars had to pay for special subscriptions that charged per TV they had in the entire bar, and the Varsity Club, which is a campus institution that is directly right next to the stadium, had to spend \$3,600 to watch the game! And for a large popular bar such as the varsity club or Buffalo Wild Wings, that is fine. But, for thousands of bars all around Ohio, game days are how they make a big portion of their money for the year, and having to choose between not streaming the game and losing all of your customers and forking over thousands of dollars is ridiculous! And the people who did pay got a horrible experience; the stream was laggy and pixelated, in bars, none of the streams were synced up, and the sound quality was horrible.

After that horrible experience, I knew we couldn't let it happen again, so this bill would prohibit all Ohio higher education institutions from entering into exclusivity contracts with streaming services. The NFL already allows local stations to broadcast their teams as part of their streaming contract, and I have spoken with our local broadcasting stations. They want to be able to provide sports to fans, and this bill would give them that chance.

The worst impact of these streaming deals is that they limit access to the students. Students pay tens of thousands of dollars every year to attend these institutions, and because of corporate greed, they can't watch their own classmates play? That is shameful. That is why this bill will require that all students of public institutions be allowed free access to broadcast sports events. The universities make enough off of the backs of their students; there is no reason students should get charged to watch their own school sports.

Ohio has some of the best college sports in the country, I hope that we will pass this bill to make sure that all everyone in Ohio has access to it.

With that, I would love to answer any questions you may have.