



# OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## **Ohio Chamber of Commerce Proponent Testimony – House Resolution 101 May 27, 2025**

Chair Miller, Vice Chair Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee. My name is Matt MacLaren, and I'm the Director of Travel and Tourism Policy at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 8,000 businesses across the state.

On behalf of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of House Resolution 101 (H.R. 101), which supports the City of Cleveland's bid to host the 2030 Special Olympics U.S.A. Games (the Games). These Games honor athletes with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and foster empowerment and unity. Hosting the games in Ohio would highlight our state and increase visitors and visitor spending.

Tourism is a \$56 billion a year industry in Ohio. This includes direct and indirect visitor spending at retailers, restaurants, lodging, transportation, attractions, and events, such as the Special Olympics U.S.A. Games. We must continue to compete and win for Ohio's tourism industry to continue to grow. And right now we are competing for the 2030 Special Olympics U.S.A. Games.

Events of the size and international recognition such as the Games carefully choose from many cities that bid to host them. Ohio cities often compete with Indianapolis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and many others to host large events. In this particular case, Cleveland and Nashville are the two finalists to host the 2030 Special Olympic U.S.A. Games.

Cleveland, has created a very competitive bid that includes over 10,000 volunteers and over \$10 million raised from corporate leaders to attract the Games to our state in 2030. Passing H.R. 101 would show Ohio supports Cleveland's efforts to host these Games, and it will strengthen their bid, and their chances to receive them.

If Cleveland is selected to host these games, all of Ohio wins. The games will have representatives from all 50 states, Canada, and the Caribbean, they will attract over

5,000 athletes and coaches and over 100,00 fans. Hosting the Games in Cleveland will enhance Ohio's "Sense of Place", a key factor in the Ohio Chamber's [Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future](#). They will bring Ohio international exposure and many first time visitors. Research shows that once a person visits Ohio for the first time, their perception of Ohio doubles as a good place to live, a good place to start a career, and a good place for job opportunities. Furthermore, it is expected the Games will generate \$70 million in economic impact for Ohio.

For these reasons, we encourage you to vote for H.R. 101, which supports the City of Cleveland's bid to host the 2030 Special Olympic U.S.A. Games right here, in Ohio, The Heart of it All.