

Ohio House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee

Proponent Testimony on House Resolution 101

May 27, 2025

Ryan Puente

Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief Government Affairs Officer

City of Cleveland

Chair Miller, Vice Chair Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee — thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on House Resolution 101, which offers support of Cleveland’s bid to host the 2030 Special Olympics USA Games.

This is more than a sporting event—it is a national celebration of empowerment and community spirit. Ohio has a unique opportunity to lead the nation in showing that people of all abilities belong at the center of public life, and Cleveland is prepared to deliver a world-class experience for athletes, families, and fans.

Hosting the Games is projected to generate over \$70 million in economic impact, drawing more than 5,500 athletes and coaches and 100,000-plus visitors from across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. These visitors will help energize the local and state economy—benefiting hotels, restaurants, transit providers, and small businesses in every corner of Greater Cleveland.

Beyond the economic benefits, this is an opportunity to showcase Cleveland on the national stage. The Games would highlight the city’s legacy of resilience and its leadership in health care, sports, and civic innovation. From our downtown and iconic venues to our inclusive community spirit and deep volunteer base, Cleveland is ready to demonstrate what a united, welcoming, and proudly Midwestern city can achieve. These Games would affirm Cleveland not only as a great host city, but as a symbol of excellence.

The Special Olympics are rooted in dignity, perseverance, and joy. Supporting this bid sends a clear message about Ohio’s values and commitments. We believe Ohio—and Cleveland—are the right places to bring those values to life in 2030.

Cleveland already has the infrastructure and civic partnerships in place to deliver an exceptional experience. With nationally recognized venues such as Rocket Arena, and with leading partners like Destination Cleveland, the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, and Special Olympics Ohio, this effort is both realistic and inspiring.

Governor Mike DeWine has publicly expressed his full support for the bid, and we’re seeing strong momentum from local institutions, nonprofits, and everyday residents ready to welcome the world.

The long-term legacy of hosting the Special Olympics USA Games would extend well beyond the summer of 2030. It would expand access, strengthen our statewide capacity for adaptive athletics and arts, and inspire future generations of Ohioans to embrace the values of service and shared opportunity.

I respectfully urge this committee to support Cleveland's bid and help Ohio seize this tremendous opportunity. These Games will leave a major legacy—not just for Cleveland, but for the entire state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.