



March 16, 2026

To Chair Miller, Vice-Chair Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells and Members of the Ohio House Arts, Athletics & Tourism Committee:

My name is Linda Logan. I am the President and CEO of the Greater Columbus Sports Commission. I along with my counterpart from the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, David Gilbert, are here today to offer interested party testimony to HB 255. Unfortunately, Mr. Gilbert is unable to join me today. Before I offer our specific concerns relative to this piece of legislation, I would like to thank Reps. Miller and Jarrells for their continued efforts to highlight sports as a significant economic driver for the state of Ohio. We certainly share that vision.

Over a decade ago, the Greater Columbus Sports Commission and the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission recognized that Ohio was at a significant competitive disadvantage when competing against other states for major sporting events. Working with this body, we established the "Major Sports Event Grant Program", a tool that has become a model for how states can attract and secure the types of sports events the draw thousands of visitors and add millions of dollars to our economy. Working with this body, we established the "Major Sports Event Grant Program", a tool that has become a model for how states can attract and secure the types of sports events the draw thousands of visitors and add millions of dollars to our economy. Between this program, and the tremendous strength of the Columbus and Cleveland Sports Commissions (among others in the state), Ohio is consistently one of the top states in the nation at attracting and hosting major sporting events.

In large part due to this program, Ohio has become, in ways, the envy of other states due our ability to attract the most competitive sports events into our state. The MLB All Star Game, NHL All Star Game, NBA All Star Game, NFL Draft, LPGA Solheim Cup, countless NCAA championships and U.S. Olympic qualifying events have come to Ohio since this program was established. As someone who is constantly competing against my peers in places like Indianapolis, Dallas, Nashville, Phoenix and other cities, I can tell you that any measure that compromise the integrity of our current program will cost Ohio the opportunity to compete for these events in the future, something that I'm sure this committee hopes to avoid.

While we should celebrate sports, creating an Ohio Sports Commission will inevitably result in unnecessary pressure and conflict between a proven program that has been in place for over a decade, and a new state commission with an unclear mission. These dueling functions will inevitably add cost, confusion and uncertainty in our ability to continue relying on state support as we compete for world class events. Of particular concern in HB 255 is the stated intent that this commission "shall partner with stakeholders to attract and host sporting events". This language seems to supersede the roll of a local organizing committee such as the Greater Columbus Sports Commission and establish the state as the host, a model that does not exist anywhere else in the United States.

Additionally, the idea of creating an Ohio sports commission fund is quite duplicative, given the fact that the sports event grant fund has existed in section 122.122 of the code for over a decade. Under current law, funds for sporting events may only be applied toward an event after a rigorous and truly objective process is completed. If an event satisfies the requirements to qualify for funds, the local organizing committee shall receive support from the state. Under this bill, these funds may be transferred from this



objective program currently in place and moved to this new program that has no such objective measures when determining how state funds should be allocated. Removing this objective process and replacing it with a body that has little comprehensive knowledge of how to compete for these events does not advance the position of Ohio. We do not need to fix a strong economic driver that is not broken.

I want to be clear; we stand ready to work with the bill sponsors and others to identify ways for Ohio to continue its wonderful track record of securing great wins for the state. Despite best intentions, unfortunately, this legislation will only muddy the water in an increasingly competitive space.

If it is this body's desire to establish an Ohio Sports Commission, we ask that you consider how that will impact our current landscape, which is considered to be among the most desirable in the country.

Thank you for your time. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda Shetina Logan".

Linda Shetina Logan
CEO & President
Greater Columbus Sports Commission