

Opposition Testimony: H.B. No. 298

Before the Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Presented by

Lucius Quick, Bartender at JACK Cleveland and Leader of UNITE HERE Local 24

Thank you, Chairman Stewart and members of the committee.

My name is Lucius Quick. I am a bartender at JACK Cleveland and a proud leader of my union, UNITE HERE Local 24. I have worked at the casino for twelve years.

JACK Cleveland is one of the best bartending jobs in the State of Ohio. I enjoy working with my coworkers and our customers. I make an hourly wage of \$14.99, and I earn tips on top of that hourly wage. I also have health insurance and retirement benefits. Because of my union job in the casino industry, I was able to support my two children through college as they studied social work and business management. Now, they have both graduated.

I am a member of the union leadership committee. I was part of negotiating the last union contract at the casino. Through collective bargaining, we have achieved wage increases, holiday pay, affordable benefits, and job protection. We cannot be terminated unless the employer shows just cause. If new technologies are introduced in the workplace that could threaten our jobs, we have the right to negotiate and we have the right to severance if we are laid off.

Before I started working at the casino, I was working in the auto industry. First, I was working in my home state of Michigan. The work was moved to Lorain, so I moved my family to Ohio. I was working at the Ford Lorain Assembly making chassis for vans. When that plant was shut down, I would have had to move to Kentucky to keep my job. The last move was very hard on my family and two young kids. So, I decided I could not move them again. I had to look for a new job.

Now, my job is threatened again, this time by iGaming.

If online casino games are legalized, I think that fewer people will come to the casinos. We can see in society in general people are doing more things online and on their phones. We have a very nice sports book at the casino for people to come watch the games and place bets. When they come in person, that creates work for us. But since online sports betting began, I have seen fewer people coming to our sports book in person. I am concerned that we could see a similar impact from casino games.

It is not a good feeling to be worried about my job security again. At 55 years old, it would be difficult for me to go back into the job market to look for work. Non-union bartending jobs do not offer the hourly wage and benefits that I make at my union job. If we had known that iGaming was a possibility, we would have pushed for higher severance payments in

case of layoffs during our last contract negotiations earlier this year. We have not had time to prepare.

I am here today to ask you to please stand with us to protect our jobs. Please oppose the legalization of iGaming. We have worked hard to make good union jobs in the casino industry. These jobs should be protected for all my coworkers, for our families, and for our communities in Ohio. Our jobs completely rely on in person business.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee today.