



Rep. Meredith Craig
77th Ohio House District

Rep. David Thomas
65th Ohio House District

Chairman Stewart, Vice Chairman Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 476, which represents a practical and much-needed modernization of Ohio law.

House Bill 476 would allow nonprofit organizations across Ohio to sell raffle tickets online. This is a straightforward solution to a growing problem. Over the past year, local nonprofits, including volunteer fire departments, have received cease-and-desist notices from the Ohio Attorney General's Office for conducting online raffles. Current law only allows for the sale of in-person raffle tickets. These groups were not acting in bad faith; they were simply adapting to a new fundraising landscape in which supporters increasingly expect to participate digitally. The sudden enforcement action left many of them in legal limbo, cutting off a vital source of fundraising revenue that had become essential to sustaining their operations.

Raffles have served as one of the most trusted and accessible fundraising tools for nonprofits in our communities. Whether to purchase new rescue equipment, support a local scholarship fund, or keep a community festival alive, these efforts rely on the generosity of neighbors, and as of late, supporters who may not live down the street but still care deeply about their hometowns.

Following our testimony, you will hear from organizations who invested time and resources into setting up online raffles, only to be told they had to stop. In many cases, this halted essential fundraising, which is now costing them thousands of dollars. This is why we included an emergency clause. At a time when the state continues to address property tax reform, we should remove any bureaucratic hurdle preventing local governments from raising funds without placing the burden on homeowners. Money raised for these essential services that doesn't come from taxpayers is a win-win for everyone.

We recognize that with any modernization of fundraising tools comes the responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability. House Bill 476 is crafted with that in mind. It would apply only to nonprofits in good standing under Ohio law and would still require adherence to all existing oversight requirements. We are committed to working with the Attorney General's Office, charitable organizations, and our colleagues in the legislature to ensure this framework maintains the integrity of charitable gaming while providing clear guidance and guardrails for online platforms.

At its core, this legislation is about modernization and common sense. Ohio's nonprofit sector provides indispensable services, often stepping in where government cannot. These organizations deserve clarity, not confusion. They deserve a law that reflects the world we live in today, where digital tools are part of everyday life. HB 476 simply gives them the flexibility to meet supporters where they are and to continue serving our communities effectively.

Chairman Stewart and members of the committee, we respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of House Bill 476. This legislation will strengthen our local nonprofits, empower our communities, and make it easier for Ohioans to support the causes they care about most. Thank you for your time, and we welcome any questions you may have.