



Representative Mike Odioso

30th House District

Representative Cindy Abrams

29th House District

House Technology and Innovation

Sponsor Testimony – House Bill 505

Tuesday, November 4th, 2025

Chair Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 505, which aims to extend Ohio’s “Son of Sam” law to crowdfunding platforms.

Ohio’s “Son of Sam Law” - R.C. 2969.02 | Payment of contract proceeds into recovery of offender's profits fund- was enacted in 1995 and did not contemplate the future use of internet, crowdfunding platform campaigns that seek to profit from violent crimes and fraud.

In recent years, there has been a troubling rise in online fundraisers that exploit tragedy for profit. Crowdfunding now accounts for billions of dollars raised.¹ These types of campaigns often blur ethical and legal lines, allowing individuals accused or convicted of violent crimes to benefit financially, or misleading donors about how their contributions will be used. Concerns arise that unexpectedly viral

¹ See [Unveiling and Brightening the Dark Side of Crowdfunding | California Management Review](#)

campaigns may swamp small a campaigner's fiduciary abilities or greatly exceed a campaigner's needs. There have also been instances of outright fraud.²³

On May 2nd of this year, Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Larry Henderson was doing traffic control at a University of Cincinnati graduation ceremony when he was intentionally struck by a car that ended his life. Following the incident, a fundraiser on GiveSendGo was launched to support the accused driver, which raised nearly \$54,000. While other platforms removed similar campaigns, GiveSendGo allowed this one to continue. This highlighted a clear gap in our law and the urgent need for accountability and transparency in the crowdfunding space.

House Bill 505 addresses this gap and was developed with guidance from the Ohio Attorney General's Office and law enforcement partners to ensure a balanced, enforceable solution that protects both donors and the public.

Key provisions of the bill include:

- 1.) Transparency and accountability - Crowdfunding platforms must include in their terms of service a prohibition against using raised funds for any unlawful purpose, acts of violence, or anything other than the stated campaign purpose.
- 2.) Refund and reporting requirements - Platforms and organizers must return unused or excess funds to donors proportionally, or, if the donors cannot be identified, remit those funds to the Attorney General's Crime Victims Recovery Fund or the Unclaimed Funds Trust Fund.
- 3.) Attorney General oversight - The Attorney General may investigate violations, issue subpoenas, and impose administrative penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation.
- 4.) Annual reporting - Platforms must report annually to the Attorney General's Office the number of campaigns launched, terminated, and refunded, ensuring transparency in how these online donations are used.

² See e.g. [Prosecutor: Pay-it-forward GoFundMe was a scam; Homeless man, couple charged - ABC7 New York](#)

³ "Several other types of fraud are prevalent in crowdfunding. First, crowdfunding opens the door for violations of intellectual property (IP) rights. This occurs when a campaign uses another person's IP without permission.. Second, crowdfunding has seen cases of payment fraud, investment fraud, embezzlement, or money laundering. Stolen credit cards are used to fund own campaigns. To increase success in all-or-nothing campaigns, founders often fund their own projects to boost the funding momentum despite rules against it. In other cases, funds are diverted for personal purposes.. Third, some crowdfunding causes are questionable at best." Unveiling and Brightening the Dark Side of Crowdfunding Mokter Hossain and Steven A. Creek. <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2021/09/unveiling-and-brightening-the-dark-side-of-crowdfunding/>

House Bill 505 does not restrict crowdfunding; Ohioans will still be able to raise funds to support their neighbors, victims, and other causes. Rather, closes a loophole that currently allows harmful campaigns to persist unchecked and ensures that no one, especially those accused or convicted of violent acts, can profit from tragedy.

This bill creates a precedent for our state and its principles: the generosity of Ohioans should never be exploited, and justice should never be for sale.

Chair Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.