

Testimony Before the Ohio Senate Education Committee

May 14, 2025

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Nick Mirisis, and I serve as CEO at Hometown, a Columbus-based company proudly serving K-12 schools across Ohio and the nation with digital event management and fundraising solutions.

We created our platform to help schools modernize how they manage events, making the process safer, more efficient, and more transparent for staff, students, and families. Digital ticketing is more than a convenience; it's a smarter, more secure way for schools to operate.

We're here today to respectfully request that the Senate repeal Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.5319 as part of the state operating budget, House Bill 96.

This law, which took effect last year, requires schools to accept cash at all school-affiliated events and to provide free admission if they cannot. It also mandates that concession stands accept cash. While well-intentioned, this law is doing more harm than good.

Here's what's at stake:

- **Operational Efficiency:** Digital ticketing reduces long lines, speeds entry into venues, and cuts down on administrative overhead - allowing schools to run events with fewer staff or volunteers - ultimately saving them more money.
- **Financial Security:** Handling cash creates risk of loss, theft, or human error. Digital systems provide secure, auditable records and reduce liability for schools, while also ensuring transparency for taxpayers that every dollar is accounted for and ultimately benefiting intended student programs.
- **Better Planning:** Real-time data helps schools understand attendance trends and make smarter decisions about staffing, security, and resources.

And here's the inconsistency: Ohio professional and collegiate sports teams are exempt from this law. For example, Nationwide Arena and The Ohio State University operate fully cashless systems at all athletic events. If we trust digital-only systems for 100,000 fans at a Buckeyes football game, it's hard to understand why we wouldn't afford that same efficiency and safety to a high school hosting a basketball game for 300 people.

This law unfairly singles out our high schools, placing burdens on local educators and administrators. We were encouraged when the House repealed this law in the substitute version of HB 96. Unfortunately, it was reinstated in the omnibus amendment. We urge the Senate to remove it once again.

Let's give our schools the flexibility they need to operate efficiently, safely, and in line with 21st-century expectations.

Thank you again for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions.