

Testimony of Boone Troyer, Executive Director

Athens County Visitors Bureau

on HB 96

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to an amendment that would redistribute lodging taxes in several counties in Ohio.

My name is Boone Troyer, and I am the Executive Director of the Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). My county falls under the parameters outlined in the original amendment. We are under 100,000 people by population, and we have more than a \$500,000 budget. If my county commissioners chose to take away 2/3 of my funding, I would immediately lay off all three of my employees. I would have to try to sell my building, work from home and take a pay cut to reserve as much money as possible for our mission of attracting travelers to Athens County.

If our CVB was left with only 1/3 of our current funding, we would also have to break some of our current contracts. If any of our vendors were to sue us for breach of contract, we would be completely bankrupt.

We would eliminate our internship program, and we would not have enough funds to continue the work we do with Ohio University. I urge you to vote no on redistributing lodging taxes. It is my understanding that the concept was brought to the legislature by Erie County, however, I question why the amendment was drafted so broadly as to include my county, as well as at least 15 other counties that we have been able to identify and probably many more.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.