

**Written Testimony of Bill Garvey**  
**on behalf of**  
**Greater Cleveland Film Commission**  
**before**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**Am. Sub. H.B. 96**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson. Thank you for allowing us to submit this Interested Party testimony on Am. Sub. H.B. 96 and the changes reflected in the sub-bill accepted this week.

First, we would like to again thank the General Assembly for its continued support for the film industry and its workforce here in Ohio. The Motion Picture and Theatre Tax Credit has generated investment flows into Ohio, generating total wages and small business revenue exceeding \$1.4 billion and 7,100 jobs in the past decade. The majority of crew who work on productions are Ohioans. They have built their careers here as the industry expands. Eighty percent of Ohio crew earn a starting salary of \$36.31 per hour plus pension and health insurance, 25% higher than the Ohio median salary (and with standard overtime in addition to base salary, roughly double the median salary for the State of Ohio).

In addition, film tourism generates lasting economic impact over decades, over \$300 million in Mansfield alone in the past 30 years since The Shawshank Redemption was filmed there. The Christmas Story house is a beacon to generations of fans making their pilgrimage to Cleveland for the past 40 years. And, now “Superman” has finally returned home to the place of his birth, reestablishing Cleveland in its rightful place as the real Metropolis. Superman is poised to be the biggest blockbuster premiere of this Summer. That kind of advertising pointing to the state where Superman was born is priceless.

However, we are very concerned about the negative impact that the inclusion of the sunset provision in the bill will have on all that we have gained. Ohio competes against Georgia, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, New Mexico, and many other states, 37 in total, with motion picture tax incentive programs. This language will put Ohio at a devastating disadvantage in attracting major projects to Ohio to create jobs and spend at Ohio small business vendors.

The sunset provision will preclude Ohio from attracting television series. Production companies do not choose any of the 38 states with production incentives if they must move their series to another state after one season. The sunset also sabotages the potential to attract feature films as well, since it will force Ohio crew to relocate out of state in advance of the end of the program. Obviously, each General Assembly has the prerogative to make changes in programs currently in permanent law. Each General Assembly is also free to adjust funding allocated for these programs. But, it is counter

productive to preemptively sunset the program and, in the process, undermine its ability to exploit the greatest opportunities for success for the current biennium.

We also ask that the Senate reinsert the language from the House version of the bill which would maintain the cap for production credits at \$75 million. This is budget neutral and flatline funding for the program. While we had hoped the Senate would increase the cap, if that is not possible, we would at least ask that we maintain the current \$75 million which the House allocated wholly to production using the \$25 million that has previously been allocated to the nascent infrastructure program. Cutting the annual cap to \$50 million will be a discouraging signal to potential new productions, weakening Ohio's ability to compete for business.

The motion picture production industry has more than doubled in total production spending and job creation over the last decade to an all-time high of \$248 billion globally in 2024. Georgia's motion picture tax incentive has transformed its economy, driving \$11 billion of direct production spending over the last three years alone and made them arguably the media production capital of the world. Ohio is positioned to benefit from this growing industry and the economic growth it brings to a state if Ohio is willing to compete..

Growing this industry is a chance to grow something special in Ohio. A wide range of Ohio high schools and colleges are educating towards this innovative multi-faceted tech industry, arming graduates with trade skills to build lucrative high paying careers in media production & post production. This is a chance for Ohio to stop hemorrhaging bright, young people and keep them engaged – and employed in Ohio. This is also a chance to bring skilled tradespeople back to Ohio to live, work, support local economies & pay state & local taxes.

With your support, Ohio will continue to grow this industry and make Ohio a global production destination so that we can bring even more jobs and economic impact to our great state.

# # #