



William P. DeMora

State Senator
25th Senate District

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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of Senate Bill 94, a reintroduction of SB 221 from last General Assembly and what I call the Peacock Bill. This legislation would prohibit universities from entering into exclusive contracts with streaming services for sporting events and would require universities to provide enrolled students with free access to broadcasts of any university athletic event.

As everyone here knows, Ohio State football reigns supreme in Columbus. As the Ohio Senate's resident super fan, I take access to college athletics very seriously. That's why I was shocked when the Big Ten signed an exclusivity agreement with NBC's Peacock streaming platform.

Since then, every time Ohio State has played on Peacock, we've seen the consequences of prioritizing profit over access. Fans can't watch the games unless they purchase a subscription. Bars are forced to buy expensive commercial streaming packages that charge per television, not by occupancy. A prime example is the Varsity Club, just steps from the stadium, which had to spend \$3,600 just to show one game! Large chains might absorb that cost, but for thousands of local bars across Ohio, especially in smaller towns, game days are a vital source of income. Being forced to choose between losing customers or forking over thousands of dollars is simply unfair.

Even those who *did* pay for the games got a bad experience. The streams were laggy, pixelated, out of sync, and plagued by poor audio quality.

But perhaps the most damaging impact is felt by our students, rural communities, and small businesses. Students pay tens of thousands of dollars each year to attend these universities. To then be told they can't watch their own classmates play unless they buy a separate streaming subscription is shameful.

Rural Ohioans are also being left behind. Many areas in our state still lack reliable high-speed internet, streaming a live sporting event simply isn't an option for them. Families, fans, and small businesses in these communities are completely shut out of access. This bill will help close that gap.

The NFL has already set a precedent by allowing local broadcasts alongside streaming. I've spoken with local broadcasters, and they're ready and willing to air these games. This legislation gives them the opportunity to serve Ohioans who've been left out of the streaming-only model.

Let me be clear—this isn't just about football. It's about fairness. It's about ensuring that access to college athletics isn't limited to those who live in urban centers with fiber internet and can afford multiple streaming services. It's about students, rural communities, and the small businesses that are the backbone of our local economies.

Ohio has some of the best college sports in the nation. Let's make sure everyone in Ohio can enjoy them.

With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.