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Testimony in Support of Ohio Senate Bill 212

Presented to the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee

June 16, 2025

Chair Patton, Vice Chair Shaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Committee:

My name is David Griffith, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Northern Ohio PGA and our charitable arm, the Northern Ohio PGA Section Foundation. I am writing today to express our strong support for Senate Bill 212 — legislation that advances youth development and increases access to impactful extracurricular opportunities across the state of Ohio.

The Northern Ohio PGA Section and our Foundation are dedicated to growing the game of golf and giving back to our communities. Through a robust network of over 500 PGA Professionals and Associates, we deliver meaningful programs that serve youth, veterans, and underserved populations across Northern Ohio's 41 counties. These professionals are leaders in their clubs and communities — and through their work with our Foundation, they become mentors, coaches, and advocates for personal development and lifelong wellness.

In 2024 alone, our PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) initiative served more than 300 veterans through 17 distinct programs, providing over 570 hours of adaptive instruction delivered by trained PGA Professionals. We are growing to 22 locations in 2025 and serve more than 350 veterans, continuing our Operation Play Days to keep participants engaged and active beyond instruction. In collaboration with the Cleveland VA, we've strengthened our approach to disability support and mental health engagement. Our annual PGA HOPE Cup brings veterans from across the region together for a powerful day of camaraderie, community, and confidence-building through golf.

Our Clubs Fore Kids initiative distributed 113 full starter club sets in 2024 and will expand to 125 in 2025. These sets — complete with clubs, balls, bag, towel, a Youth on Course membership, and a coaching manual — are delivered directly to juniors and high school teams. Each team also receives a free clinic from a PGA Professional, forming the start of an ongoing coach-athlete relationship. Our PGA Professionals volunteer their time to provide this instruction, and in 2024, we also hosted a Coach Certification Day at Westfield Country Club for 25 high school coaches, giving them tools to better support their teams.

Youth programming is a cornerstone of our Foundation's efforts. Participation in our Junior Tour has grown dramatically from 503 members in 2020 to 750 in 2025, with more than 4,000 competitive rounds projected this year. Our three-tiered tour structure — Futures Tour, Junior Tour, and 36-hole college-prep events — provides a long-term developmental pathway for young athletes. We continue to offer financial aid to ensure no junior is left out; over \$15,000 in assistance will be awarded in 2025.

On behalf of our Section, our Foundation, and the 500 PGA Professionals and Associates who dedicate their time and talent to serve our communities, I respectfully urge your support of Senate Bill 212. With your backing, we can continue to expand access, break down barriers, and positively shape the next generation through the game of golf throughout the state with our counterparts in Southern Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Griffith" clearly legible.

David Griffith
Executive Director
Northern Ohio PGA & Northern Ohio PGA Section Foundation
dgriffith@pgahq.com
C: 330-607-3351
P: 216-765-2114