SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 331 | MARCH 24, 2026

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, my name is Shawn Kasych, and I am honored to present this testimony in support of SB 331 on behalf of the Ohio Mayors Alliance.

As a bipartisan coalition of mayors in Ohio's largest cities, finding, developing, and retaining a highly qualified public workforce is a universal and consistent challenge. We support SB 331 because we believe that providing opportunities for our hospitality employees to accept gratuities for the exceptional services they provide will give our cities another way to ensure the compensation we offer remains affordable to taxpayers and competitive for our workforce.

As our cities work in collaboration with local and state partners to catalyze development and growth across Ohio, we see more opportunities to work together to create exciting new recreational and cultural institutions and facilities to make our cities better places to live, work, and play. Along with those new opportunities come new demands on our public employees, many of whom have chosen to work in service to their communities despite more lucrative opportunities being available elsewhere. As you know, however, the pride of public service brings with it many sacrifices, and to the extent that we can work together to minimize those sacrifices, we should. We believe that SB 331 provides a unique opportunity to ensure that we can minimize some of the financial sacrifice some of our public-facing employees make. It also ensures that those jobs are competitive with jobs available at similar privately-owned facilities.

We are grateful to the bipartisan leadership of Senators Wilson and Blackshear for introducing SB 331 and seeking our cities' input and guidance to ensure that this approach meets our needs and complies with Ohio ethics laws. Clarity around what qualifies as unlawful additional compensation in this circumstance is needed and very welcome, and it's always an honor to work together in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

We are glad to be here today to support SB 331, and we are happy to answer your questions and provide any additional information or data that would be helpful to you as you consider SB 331.