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H.B. 697
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 697's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Hiner

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill may result in permissive broadcasting costs or revenue gains for public schools, depending on local broadcast arrangements, by prohibiting the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) from entering into exclusive post-season broadcast agreements and declaring a school's right to broadcast post-season or playoff events if the school's athletic team is participating in them.

Detailed Analysis

The Ohio High School Athletic Association's (OHSAA) media regulations establish rules for broadcast rights, media access, and content restrictions during regular season and tournament athletic events. Host schools control regular season media access. However, OHSAA has negotiated exclusive live video rights for select post-season contests with Spectrum and the NFHS Network. Spectrum holds exclusive live TV rights for select post-season football and basketball events, with no other live or delayed video allowed. NFHS Network holds exclusive live streaming rights for many post-season tournaments, with no competing live video allowed. Delayed video of NFHS-covered events may be allowed if the venue can accommodate the request. Live audio broadcasts of post-season contests are permitted while live video broadcasts are permitted if the contest is not covered by Spectrum or the NFHS Network though the media providing video (live or delayed) or live audio for such events generally pay OHSAA a media rights fee. OHSAA waives these fees for high school student broadcasts on a school-owned or controlled webpage.

The bill prohibits OHSAA or any other organization that regulates interscholastic conferences or events from entering into exclusive broadcast agreements for post-season or playoff events that prohibits a school or a local broadcaster from broadcasting them. The bill also declares each public or nonpublic school's right to broadcast post-season and playoff events in which its athletic team participates. For a local broadcaster to broadcast school post-season or

playoff competitions under the bill, it must have either previously provided broadcast services for any school activity in the local area or enter into a formal agreement with the school to carry the event. The bill expressly does not void or affect a contract entered into prior to the bill's effective date, though it does apply to the renewal of a contract after that date. Thus, the bill's provisions will begin to apply to any agreement OHSAA enters into after the current agreements with Spectrum and NFHS Network expire.

As alluded to above, under current OHSAA media regulations, member schools may enter into contracts with local broadcasters to cover regular season events or may self-broadcast those events. It is likely that schools would choose to broadcast future post-season events using similar methods, either through newly negotiated agreements with local broadcasters or through self-broadcasting via online streaming or other platforms.

For schools that elect to self-broadcast, there may be technical, equipment, or other costs associated with filming and streaming events. However, these costs are permissive. Schools that independently negotiate broadcast arrangements for post-season events under the bill may also gain revenue from those agreements. The extent of any revenue gains would vary based on a school's athletic programs, the characteristics of its local broadcast market, and the level of demand from local broadcasters for access to playoff events.