



Testimony of Alesha Washington
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Before the Senate State and Local Government Committee
House Bill 47
April 21, 2015

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Hottinger and members of the Committee. My name is Alesha Washington; I represent the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), Northeast Ohio's metropolitan chamber of commerce. On behalf of our 10,000 members, we are grateful for this opportunity to communicate our support of House Bill 47, specifically as it relates to AM0542, which would change the population threshold for the F-8 permit to allow counties with a population of more than 750,000 to apply.

The mission of the Greater Cleveland Partnership is to mobilize private sector leadership, expertise and resources to create jobs and economic vitality for the region. We do that in many ways – by promoting public policies that improve the business and economic climate; continuing the momentum that is underway with regard to education reform and workforce development; and working to enhance our physical infrastructure and next-generation projects and civic assets.

GCP works closely with our public and civic partners to create vibrant places that attract residents and visitors from throughout the region. A major project underway is the \$32M renovation of Public Square, that once complete will be a major attraction to Cleveland's downtown core. In order to maximize this investment, the proposed change to the F-8 permit would allow Cuyahoga County to strategically plan programming and events throughout the year, similar to what Hamilton County is able to do with Fountain Square. Seeking this change to the F-8 permit now would enable Cleveland to take advantage of programming on Public Square when we host the Republican National Convention in July 2016 and it sets the stage for ongoing events that can be planned for the community once the Convention is over.

We applaud Representatives Driehaus and Blessing for their work on House Bill 47 and for their support of this amendment, as well as Senator Seitz for his work on Senate Bill 95 and his willingness to sponsor this amendment. We hope we can count on your support and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.