

Carl J. Grassi

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Louis W. Blessing, III
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Blessing,

I'm writing to express support of HB 531, which would fund the Major Sporting Event Grant Program. The legislation calls for funding the program with the incremental increase in state sales tax generated by large scale sporting events. The bill would also remove limitations on the amount of grants that may be awarded in a fiscal year.

Ohio established the Major Sporting Event Grant Program in 2009 to assist local organizing committees in securing very large competitively bid sporting events. To qualify for the existing grant program, an event must be projected to generate at least \$250,000 in an incremental increase in the state sales tax. This program is currently funded on a biennial basis, which has proven challenging since there is no funding guarantee beyond the current biennium. With communities currently bidding on events as far into the future as 2025, HB 531 will create a much needed, long-term funding mechanism to assist communities with the costs associated with hosting these events.

HB 531 will allow Ohio organizations to remain competitive with other states across the country, of which 34 have existing state programs. HB 531 is modeled after Texas. It would create the Sports Event Grant Fund, funded with half of the incremental increase in state sales tax attributable to a major sporting event that takes place in Ohio. Further, the state will continue to receive 50% of all incremental sales tax that is associated with these events. These funds are only transferred back to the local communities after the event concludes, so there is no risk assumed by the state.

HB 531 has the support of the hotel and lodging industry, which sees the strong economic impact that results from large scale sporting events across the state, as well as professional and collegiate sports teams throughout the state.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue in the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Carl J. Grassi
Chairman, Greater Cleveland Sports Commission

cc: Speaker Cliff Rosenberger
Representative Greenspan
Representative Schuring