



Proponent Testimony on House Bill 531

Senate Finance Committee

Ken Schnacke, President and General Manager, Columbus Clippers

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Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 531, which would establish the Sports Event Grant Fund to make grants under Ohio's Major Sporting Event Grant Program.

My name is Ken Schnacke, I am the President and General Manager of the Columbus Clippers. At the Clippers, we value the community we serve. We pride ourselves on working well with other teams and support large community events as we see the benefit that these events have on the entire community. Clippers games are family events.

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, an event must be projected to generate at least \$250,000 in an incremental increase in the state sales tax. Historically, the program has been funded on a biennial basis, which has proven challenging because there is no assurance that the program will be funded in out-years. For this reason, HB 531 is needed as it will create a long-term funding mechanism for this program.

HB 531 would contribute half of the incremental state sales tax increase attributable to a qualifying event to the grant fund. Grants would then be made from the fund to fulfill a portion of the obligations required by a site selection organization.

The Clippers hosted both the Triple-A All-Star Game and the Triple-A National Championship Game this year. These events featured the top Triple-A players, entertainment and contests. Columbus was the first franchise to host both events in the same season. If in place, this bill would have greatly helped with planning for these events. It is our goal to continue to host these major sporting events in the future, which would be assisted with passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important topic. I ask for your support of House Bill 531.