

Public Testimony: HB 110
Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Matt Dolan, Chairman

Melody Young, Ross-Chillicothe Convention & Visitors Bureau

June 2, 2021

Chairman Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Melody Young, and I have been the executive director of the Ross County Visitors Bureau for 9 years. Last year I joined the board of trustees of the Ohio History Connection and for many years before that I have been involved in the lengthy process of working to get some of Ohio's 2,000-year-old American Indian earthworks inscribed as Ohio's first sites to make it onto the prestigious World Heritage List.

I am here today in support of the Ohio History Connection budget and to thank you for your continued support of Ohio History over the years. Right now, is a time to make an investment for future generations. There is a big need at the Serpent Mound site in Adams County. You heard from my good friend Beth Jenkins about that yesterday.

I want to shine a light on the Site and Museum Operations (budget line 360-502) of the Ohio History Connection budget. This line item tries to serve the needs of more than 50 historic sites and museums across the state. Some of those sites have security needs like Serpent Mound. Other sites are under-resourced with too few people or visitor amenities. There are significant needs, but there are also significant opportunities.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks World Heritage nomination represents one such opportunity for Ohio. This nomination includes the Newark Earthworks in Licking County, Fort Ancient in Warren County and the ancient mounds located at the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Ross County where I grew up and work today.

With your help, we can increase the awareness to communities locally, nationally, and internationally and give everyone the opportunity to have an experience to learn from our past which will help guide us to a brighter future, it is up to us to keep the story going....

This ancient culture built these beautiful complexes of earthworks to bring people together and Chillicothe name means gathering place, we want people to come and be a part of the of this incredible journey in our region. I feel it is important to continue to uphold this tradition and I am proud to promote the mounds and their history. There is so much more to discover about the Hopewell Culture, protection of the sites as a UNESCO world heritage site will provide the safeguard to protect the lands and share the ancient's stories with the world.

A big thank you to Senator Terry Johnson for working with the Ohio History Connection to consider a budget amendment in support of providing some critical security measures that will

allow us to protect this national historic landmark for future generations. The Ohio History Connection has requested \$600,000 for important security measures for Serpent Mound and other Ohio History Connection sites, \$100,000 in FY 2022 in support of next year's bicentennial of the birth of Ulysses S. Grant and \$100,000 in FY 2023 in support of Ohio's World Heritage initiative to get the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks added to the World Heritage List.

We ask that the Ohio Senate add \$700,000 to Line 360-502 of the Ohio History Connection budget (Sites and Museum Operations). This is especially important, and it will make a huge difference in our ability to protect places like Serpent Mound and also show off to the world that Ohio has internationally significant sites. I thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you have of me.