



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 225
November 8, 2021

Testimony by Shea MacMillan

Chairman Dolan and members of the Finance committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 225, sponsored by senator Kirk Schuring, on behalf of the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber.

The Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber represents 2,500 members who employ 150,000 residents throughout the Mahoning Valley. We work with government officials to advocate for economic development policies in addition to spearheading local economic development in Trumbull and Mahoning Counties. Our efforts in economic development span from business, retention and expansion visits, project managements for expansion and attraction projects, as well as site selection support with the maintenance of a property database.

I stand here today in support of Senate Bill 225. This bill will make temporary enhancements to the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) and the Ohio Opportunity Zone Tax Credit, which are critical as we continue to emerge from the pandemic. COVID-19 has leveled devastating blows to community revitalization efforts across Ohio. Communities of all sizes are seeking short-term solutions to a once-in-a-century event. Doubling the total pool of funds and the cap per project per year will provide an incredible and immediate impact to new revitalization efforts across the state. It will also open the door to investments from outside Ohio while creating new jobs and taxes for communities.

The HPTC has proven to be an unquestionable success for the state of Ohio. An economic impact analysis conducted by Cleveland State University showed that for every \$1.00 of the credit invested, it led to a return of \$6.72. This proves that our state is an ideal location to develop historic properties.

Communities such as Youngstown could see once-in-a-generation projects come to fruition with passage of this bill. In recent years, both of our county seats, the City of Warren in Trumbull County and the City of Youngstown in Mahoning County have experienced increased economic activity in their downtowns. Both cities have collaborated with developers to make major improvements to existing buildings and attract unique attraction opportunities like breweries, restaurants, amphitheaters, and hotels. This success has drawn more and more attention to the



remaining vacant properties downtown, leveraging the amenities listed above to attract renovation of office space and consideration of residential projects.

However, due to covid, the downtown successes have been challenged, with office work temporarily operating remotely, our restaurants and pipeline projects are in a fragile state, something that I am confident is not only occurring in the Mahoning Valley. With the proposed improvements in Senate Bill 225, we see the momentum around developing our downtowns salvaged. The increase in aggregate cap for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 in addition to increasing the cap per project allows our smaller market to greater our chances to secure Historic Preservation Tax Credits and retain our project pipeline.

The Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber asks for your support of Senate bill 225. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and share my thoughts with you today.