Testimony by David Rodrigo

 Casino Employee at Hollywood Columbus

 Before the Senate Governemnt Oversight & Reform Committee

On H.B 32

February 14, 2017

Thank you Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Yuko and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding House Bill 32. My name is David Rodrigo. I am here on behalf of myself and the casino employees in our state that have been prohibited from gambling in Ohio because we are employed by casinos in Ohio. The passage of HB 32 is a small but necessary change that would help keep revenue in Ohio rather than driving it to other states.

About 4.5 years ago, I was introduced to the casino industry when I took a job working at a Hollywood Casino Columbus. In Nevada there is no law prohibiting casino employees from gambling at any casino, even the one at which they are employed. I am certainly not advocating that Ohio mirror Nevada, I only bring up this example to show how far the other way some states govern their casino employees. Pennsylvania law when they first allowed casino gaming in their state was similar to Ohio's. They have since changed their law to allow casino employees to gamble at casinos not owned by companies they are employed by. To the best of my knowledge all the states surrounding Ohio allow casino employees to gamble within the state they are also employed in.

 Probably the most unfair part of this law is that Ohio has multiple racino establishments where their employees cannot only go to other racinos for entertainment they can also visit any one of Ohio's 4 casinos. This law is bordering on discriminatory to all the Ohio casino employees who wish to patronize our states casinos.

In closing, I would like to mention that it is my understanding that the Casino Control Commission has testified in support of this small change to the law. I also believe this bill passed out of the House by a 94-3 vote and I hope all the respected members of this committee will give this bill serious consideration. I would be honored to take any questions any of you may have for me regarding this bill.