Thank you Chairman Coley and Committee members. I appreciate the opportunity to express my support in keeping the Columbus Crew in Ohio.

My name is Karen Crognale and my husband Corey and I have 3 boys. We jumped in the soccer world with both feet in 1998 - the year our oldest signed up with Gahanna Soccer Association. One is now a Columbus Crew Academy Coach, one is a current player on the Crew, and the third is a collegiate player at the University of Maryland. All three have been successful because the Columbus Crew has invested in a youth academy devoted to helping kids achieve athletic and academic goals through soccer. As an ardent supporter of soccer and its growth in our community and country, it’s obvious why I am convinced we need to keep the Crew in Columbus. It has been a thread woven through our family that would be impossibly unraveled.

I have worked as a volunteer with the youth teams and then as a full-time employee as the Crew Academy Manager from 2007 until July 2013. Through my involvement, I advised countless families on the direction their child should go regarding, training, clubs, and colleges. I put my trust in the Crew academy system and the youth players it supports in Columbus and throughout the entire state of Ohio. I have personally witnessed the sacrifice of dozens of families who traveled 4-6 hours 3 to 4 times a week from cities like Youngstown, Cleveland, Xenia and Cincinnati to attend training sessions in Columbus. If the Crew were to move to Texas, Ohio children pursing goals to play soccer at the highest level will suffer.

I would ask that you support this resolution, as I believe keeping the Crew in Columbus is truly best for families, not only in Columbus, but also throughout our great state of Ohio.

Thank you,

Karen Crognale

Blacklick, Ohio