



**Senate Transportation Committee  
Playhouse Square Testimony – Tim Birch  
Senate Bill 285  
November 16, 2022**

Good morning Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 285 to create the Playhouse Square license plate and include it in the State Treasurer license plate contribution fund.

As a not-for-profit performing arts center, Playhouse Square is impacted by lasting effects from the 15-month closure necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic when 86% of our staff was laid off or furloughed and our operations all but completely ceased. Funds raised by the Playhouse Square license plate will help us continue our mission of presenting and producing a wide variety of performing arts, advancing arts education and creating a thriving destination for entertainment, business and residential living.

Education is a cornerstone of our mission, and we are able to reach over 200 thousand of Ohioans with free and low-cost programming each year. Northeast Ohio students attend matinee shows while classrooms from across the state tune in to streaming performances, and both receive complementary workshops and materials to connect what they see on stage to class lessons. Playhouse Square teaching artists help underserved elementary schools create sustainable musical theater programs, which have been shown to increase student attendance and confidence. Aspiring young artists take master classes led by performers who appear on stage at Playhouse Square.

All of this work and more to enrich the lives of Ohioans will be supported by funds from the Playhouse Square license plate.

Chairwoman Kunze and members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.