



**HIPPODROME
THEATRE** *at the*
FRANCE-MERRICK
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis
Chairman, Economic Matters Committee
House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 747/1235 - Commercial Law - Consumer Protection - Ticket Transfers

Dear Chairman Davis:

I am writing on behalf of the Hippodrome Theatre at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center in Baltimore **in opposition to House Bill 747/1235**. The Hippodrome Theatre is the only venue in Maryland that presents a National Touring Broadway series.

House Bill 747/1235 is vague and places unnecessary new regulations on the primary ticketing market. As drafted, it will limit the ability of artists, teams, producers and presenters, who have taken 100 percent of the artistic and financial risk for their event, from ensuring tickets, go to fans and patrons, rather than to brokers who buy tickets for the sole purpose of reselling them at an enormous profit. Additionally, the proposal undermines the terms under which tickets to an artist's or venue's own events may be sold.

This is a case of Maryland event presenters and venues vs. out-of-state scalpers and companies. By banning trusted ticketing methods that help keep tickets at a reasonable price intended for Maryland ticket buyers, there will be significant interference with a robust and dynamic competitive marketplace. This will put out-of-state ticket scalpers ahead of your constituents.

Those supporting this bill frame it as a property rights issue. Do not be fooled. To be clear, we are not opposed to legitimate ticket resale. Many ticket buyers enjoy the options available to them on the resale market. We do, however, reject the attempt in this proposal to redefine ticket ownership. The provisions of House Bill 747/1235 will allow brokers to resell tickets with impunity while providing no benefit to the ticket buying public.

12 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201



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Under normal circumstances, Maryland has a thriving entertainment industry that is vital to the state's economy. Artists will avoid Maryland's live performance venues if the General Assembly overturns existing law or places additional, and unnecessary, regulations on Maryland-based venues and producers which benefit out-of-state companies that profit by reselling expensive tickets to Maryland consumers.

Brokers are not consumers, they do not represent the interests of consumers, and the Maryland General Assembly should not endorse their practices. House Bill 747/1235 only helps groups supported by resale sites and organizations whose profitability is directly tied to how much they can inflate the price of a ticket resold to patrons and fans. This legislation hurts Maryland consumers and venues like the Hippodrome Theatre, who rely on patrons being able to afford to come to events again and again. We ask you to oppose House Bill 747/1235.

ALL of Maryland's major live entertainment & sports venues oppose this bill, please don't be tricked into moving this damaging bill cloaked as a "consumer protection" act forward.

Sincerely,

Ron Legler
President, Hippodrome Theatre

cc: Members, Economic Matters Committee
Delegate Watson

12 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201