



Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brian Young, Director of Public Policy for Sports Fans Coalition¹, a national non-profit advocacy organization devoted to representing fans wherever public policy impacts the games we love. This includes advocating for equal pay for women athletes and passing the *Equal Pay for Team USA Act*²; the Sports Bettors Bill of Rights which, through working with Senator Zucker, now protects Maryland sports bettors; college, name, image and likeness protections, especially through the passing of the *Jordan McNair Safe and Fair Play Act*³ alongside Comptroller Lierman, and opposing publicly financed sports stadiums, such as Monumental Sports' attempted move to Alexandria, VA.

Marylanders love their sports, whether it's the Ravens, Commanders, Orioles, Terrapins or Navy. Maryland has some of the richest sports cultures in the country. Maryland also has some of the top sports arenas and stadiums in the nation. We believe Marylanders should have access to a fair, transparent, and fan-friendly live event ticketing marketplace. HB 701, asks the right questions and addresses the problems most affecting fans today. We thank this committee for their work on this important bill. However, we urge the committee to strengthen several aspects of the bill to avoid unintended consequences that if unchanged would have the potential to further entrench a monopolist's power in Maryland and harm the fan experience.

First, let me start by saying we support upfront pricing. We believe the first price you see should be the last and **only** price you ever see.

While there are a few provisions we believe need amending, the most important to sports fans is the prohibition on reselling season tickets for more than "a comparable ticket." Especially in the age of dynamic pricing, knowing what a comparable ticket is can be difficult. Do we expect fans to check the primary market first before listing their ticket, and then adjust the price as demand fluctuates every day?

Fans often invest thousands of dollars per year, every year to support their favorite team. However, many of these fans rely on selling a high-profile or rivalry game to subsidize the investment or even afford playoff tickets – something Ravens fans know well this year. Those who say "if you can't afford it alone, don't buy it" fail to recognize that many of these season ticket licenses are heirlooms and may be passed down to younger generations, carrying with it an emotional commitment. Or, maybe the fan could have afforded it without resale but was laid off recently and needs to make a mortgage payment or pay a surprise medical bill.

Price caps like this can also give life to a gray market where fans don't have any of the protections legitimate exchanges provide. We urge you to strike this paragraph.

¹ www.sportsfans.org

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2333>

³ <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/HB0125?ys=2021RS&search=True>



We also believe that Transferability is the best consumer protection for fans. In fact transferability results in savings for sports fans, who can often buy a ticket below face value. We analyzed more than 25 million tickets sold on the secondary market and found between 2017 and 2023 sports fans saved nearly \$260 million by buying tickets on the secondary market. In that same study, Maryland sports fans saved about \$2 million. In states that protect transfer and have professional sports teams, those savings were on average \$14 million per state.⁴ We urge you to amend Paragraph F on page 4 to guarantee the Right to Transferability.

We share concerns with fellow consumer advocates over the data sharing requirement on resellers to provide a customer's contact information with the ticket issuer. While proponents claim it's necessary for emergency communications, they currently have a number of ways to contact their fans, including through the secondary market who will contact fans in the case of these emergencies. This requirement instead would empower the primary ticketers and venues to market and share customer data without a fan's consent. Additionally, it would grant Live Nation/Ticketmaster and other primary ticket sellers the information needed to cancel tickets of fans who choose not to purchase tickets directly through their preferred channel. We recommend striking this provision.

Thank you for your work to protect fans, and I'm happy to answer any questions the committee may have and hope to continue the conversation with the working group.

Brian Young
Director, Public Policy
Sports Fans Coalition