



Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brian Hess, Executive Director of Sports Fans Coalition, a national non-profit advocacy organization devoted to representing fans wherever public policy impacts the games we love. This includes fighting sports blackouts, advocating for equal pay for women athletes and getting the federal Equal Pay for Team USA Act signed into law, providing resources for those at risk of gambling addiction, opposing publicly financed sports stadiums, including against Monumental Sports' attempted move to Alexandria, VA, and ticketing consumer protections.

SFC in partnership with the nation's leading consumer groups developed The Ticket Buyer Bill of Rights, a set of principles that should serve as a framework for ticketing legislation that can improve the live events ticketing market that serves millions of fans each year. The Bill of Rights features five pillars:

1. The Right to Transferability, where ticket holders decide how to use, sell or give away their tickets if they wish, and not the entity that sold them the tickets;
2. The Right to Transparency, which includes all-in pricing, a prohibition on deceptive websites, disclosures of any relevant information to help consumers make informed purchasing decision, such as information about ticket holdbacks and availability;
3. The Right to Set the Price, so that companies who originally sold the tickets cannot dictate to fans the price at which they can or cannot resell their purchased tickets;
4. The Right to a Fair Marketplace, where fans compete with actual humans, not illegal software bots for tickets;
5. The Right to Recourse, where harmed fans retain the choice to seek remedies through the public court system and are not blocked by terms and conditions that force them into private arbitration.

Marylanders love sports, from the Ravens to the Orioles, Terrapins to Navy. Maryland also has some of the best arenas in the nation. We believe Marylanders should have access to a fair, transparent, and fan-friendly live event ticketing marketplace. SB 539, asks the right questions and tries to get at the problems most affecting fans today. However, many of the solutions would have unintended consequences that could further entrench a monopolist's power in Maryland and lead to an overall worse fan experience for fans.

First let me start by saying we support upfront-pricing.

While there are a few provisions we believe need amending, 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?



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. We urge you to strike this paragraph.

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 Maryland sports fans saved less than \$2 million – well below the national average for states that don't protect transferability. In states which protect transfer, those savings were on average \$14 million per state.<sup>1</sup> We urge you to amend Paragraph F on page 4 to guarantee the Right to Transferability.

Amending these two provisions would go a long way to turning this bill into a truly pro-fan piece of legislation. However, examining Senators Hershey's and Klausmeier's SB 1113 offers many other solutions that would make Maryland one of the most pro-fan and pro-consumer states in the country.

I'm happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Brian Hess  
Executive Director  
Sports Fans Coalition

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<https://www.ticketbuyerbillofrights.org/ticket-transferability-helps-sports-fans-save-260-million-over-5-years-infographic>