



Artistic Directors

John Heimbuch
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Executive Director

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Hello MN House of Representatives Taxes Committee,

My name is John Heimbuch, and I am the co-Artistic Director of Walking Shadow Theatre Company in Minneapolis, as well as a freelance writer, performer, and director of stage and screen. I was born in Richfield MN, and have lived and worked in MN District 62B for most of my professional life.

I am writing to voice my support for the tax credit production incentive bill (House Bill HF 1975), and to request that it be included in the Omnibus Tax Bill. Production incentives will help raise the visibility of Minnesota, and provide jobs, as well as providing valuable economic benefits for all Minnesotans. While the economic incentives for this program are clear, I've seen how important these production incentives can be to the health and wellbeing of our state, with cultural impact far beyond their financial benefit.

I distinctly recall the film production boom that Minnesota experienced in the 1990s, and the way that helped raise the visibility of our state throughout the world with films like Fargo, Grumpy Old Men, Twenty Bucks, Jingle All the Way, Untamed Heart, Drop Dead Fred, Iron Will, The Mighty Ducks, Drop Dead Gorgeous, and many others. These films not only provided significant amounts of work to local actors, production staff, and support staff, but they also helped make Minnesota known to a broader audience by putting its locations, landmarks, and cultural touchstones into the public consciousness.

Since then, too many films that *should have been* filmed here (such as Juno and Gran Torino) were not, and we have lost tremendous potential for self-representation as a result. Worse, a lack of local production opportunities has meant that an entire generation of film and TV professionals have left Minnesota for other markets, taking the homegrown artistry that might best represent our state with them.

More recently, I spent the 2018 Superbowl as a rideshare driver, and had many conversations with out of town visitors and national TV production staff, who all used 1980s and 1990s media as their cultural references of our state. It became clear to me during that week just how much economic benefit can be generated for a state with robust TV/Film production incentives, both in the Twin Cities and throughout the entire state.

I believe that Minnesota is well positioned to again become a cultural export economy, with the diverse geography, talent, and enthusiasm to make this possible -- but only if we include HF 1975 in the Omnibus Tax Bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

John Heimbuch
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