

Testimony of Jim Koplik, Chairman, Live Nation Northeast Region

Raised HB 5298: An Act Concerning the Fair Sale of Tickets to Entertainment Events

Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak, Members of the General Law Committee,

I am Jim Koplik of Stamford, Connecticut. I am Chairman of the Northeast Region of Live Nation Entertainment, Inc., the world's largest concert and live entertainment company which includes under its corporate umbrella, Ticketmaster, the premier ticket delivery platform. Live Nation owns and operates the Oakdale Theatre, Comcast Theatre previously known as The Meadows and presents concerts at many other venues throughout Connecticut including Mohegan Sun Arena, Rentschler Field, Hartford's XL Center, The Shubert Theatre, to name but a few.

As a Connecticut resident, I am well into my fifth decade of presenting live concerts to the Connecticut public. I am here today with many other representatives of the entertainment community in opposition to Raised Bill 6298. If any component of this proposed legislation is enacted, it will not serve the interest of the Connecticut public. Rather, it has an overarching purpose to enhance the access to tickets for ticket resellers. Simply put, this is bad legislation and its adoption will act to discourage artists from performing in Connecticut and will limit the access to tickets to Connecticut events by the general public at the initial sale.

Performing artists and promoters are the owners of event tickets prior to the offering for sale. They bear the costs and the risks of the event. Accordingly, they do and should set the conditions for sale. While Live Nation does not oppose the practice of commercial ticket reselling, certain performing artists do. In the interest of protecting their fans, including the thousands of them that reside here in Connecticut, several artists have chosen to sell their tickets using paperless ticketing technology, which allows them to put their tickets on sale at a lower price than the ticket is worth on the market. This technology also discourages ticket resellers from obtaining large quantities in advance of or in competition with the general public.

Similarly, in order to protect consumers, we have language in our terms of use that prohibit the use of bots -- computer programs which enable mass ticket purchases that defeat the security screens designed to require customers to complete a single sale, essentially allowing an individual to "jump the line," so to speak.

At this time competition for events is robust, and Connecticut can ill afford this legislation which will give cause for artists to play in other states. Any restriction upon the number or percentage of tickets which a performing artist may hold for its use, or which will control the method of ticket distribution will most certainly result in the loss of concerts in Connecticut, with the resulting economic sacrifice.

Raised Bill 6298 does NOT advance the interest of Connecticut consumers. In fact, it WILL certainly result in a meaningful reduction of the number of performing artists which appear in the State of Connecticut. All Connecticut venues, promoters and producers speak with one voice in opposition to this ill conceived legislation.

It would be ludicrous for the State of Connecticut to enact legislation that would restrict performers, venues and promoters from arranging sale of their tickets in the manner which will best enable marketing success of the event.

We in the entertainment industry believe strongly that our policies and practices are designed and in fact do operate to bring the greatest number of live performance events to our State. Please make no mistake, this bill will harm those efforts.