



Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is **Nathaniel Marro**, and I am the Executive Director of the **National Independent Talent Organization (NITO)**. NITO is a 501(c)6 trade organization representing hundreds of independent talent agencies and artist managers nationwide. Our members work directly with more than **5,000 touring artists**, including Vermont icons **Noah Kahan and Phish**. Many of these artists tour through Vermont every year—playing local theaters, music halls, community venues, fairs, and nonprofit presenters that are central to Vermont’s creative economy.

I am also a **born-and-raised Vermonter** and a proud product of Vermont’s arts ecosystem. I represented Rutland schools in district and All-State Jazz ensembles, represented Vermont in All-New England and All-Eastern jazz bands, performed in community theater productions, won the Vermont Student Written Play Competition, and played dozens of shows at venues like Radio Bean, Nectar’s, and the Discover Jazz Festival. I share this because, unlike many outside organizations weighing in on this issue, I have a deep personal connection to this state. I am proud that Vermont is advancing this legislation and positioning itself as a national leader in protecting fans from predatory ticketing practices.

In Vermont, live events are not abstract products—they are **community experiences**. They support local workers, downtown businesses, restaurants, and hotels, and they help define the character of towns across the state. When ticketing practices become deceptive or exploitative, the harm is not theoretical. It is felt directly by Vermont fans and Vermont businesses.

One of the most damaging practices we see is **speculative ticketing**—tickets being listed for resale before they even exist, or before they are available to the general public. Fans believe they are purchasing a real ticket, often at an inflated price, only to later discover that delivery is uncertain or that the ticket never materializes at all. This uncertainty erodes trust not just in resale platforms, but in the entire live event ecosystem.

We also see widespread use of **deceptive resale websites** that closely mimic real Vermont venues to create the false impression that consumers are buying directly from a local presenter. By the time fans realize they have purchased from a reseller, they have often paid far more than intended and feel misled. I saw this firsthand while working with artists. We regularly received

messages from fans who had paid hundreds of dollars more because they unknowingly purchased through a deceptive site.

Unrestricted resale markets allow bad actors to acquire tickets in bulk and impose inflated prices that bear no relationship to the original ticket price. The artist Billy Strings played two shows at the Essex fairgrounds in 2023. The face value price for those shows was \$55. The average resale price was three times that at **\$188.43**. All total, Vermont fans paid **\$65,786.00** more than they should have. That money went out of state to ticket resellers instead of local businesses. These resale practices distort competition, mislead consumers, and artificially raise prices for Vermonters who simply want to attend local events. A clear cap on resale prices helps restore a functional and fair market by:

- Ensuring fans are not subjected to predatory markups that can double or triple the original ticket price
- Protecting artists and venues that rely on accessible pricing to fill seats
- Preserving revenue within Vermont's live event ecosystem instead of allowing it to be siphoned off by national or offshore resale platforms

Importantly, these caps **do not eliminate resale**. They simply prevent abuse. Fans who genuinely cannot attend an event retain the ability to resell tickets, which should be protected, while the most predatory profiteering practices are curbed. However, NITO has documented instances where over 50% of available tickets for a single show were resold on secondary platforms. Unforeseen circumstances, like an illness or the babysitter cancelling, do not explain half the audience reselling a ticket. It is the result of industrial-scale resale operations, often backed by outside investors and private equity. Regular fans are not competing with each other for the best seats; they are competing against well-funded professionals armed with the latest technology, whose sole aim is to extract profit from the system. Reigning in bad actors prevents this behavior and creates a more equitable system for all.

NITO's data shows that the **average resale ticket costs roughly twice the face value price**. Artists and venues that attempt to combat these practices cannot solve the problem alone. The harm to fans is real and measurable. Consumers have a finite amount of money to spend on entertainment; when they are forced to overspend on a single resale ticket, they have less to spend on other shows, local restaurants, or nearby businesses. Just as importantly, **none of the inflated resale revenue goes back to the artist, venue, workers, or community**. It is purely extractive.

I understand that some may struggle with restrictions on how much someone can charge for anything. But it is important to remember that **a ticket is not traditional property**—it is a revocable license to attend a private event. You cannot resell airline tickets or hotel reservations at a markup but imagine if someone bought up all the hotel rooms during peak ski season at Killington to resell them? Or someone was reselling Burlington to Fort Lauderdale plane tickets during the snow bird months? Even artists like **Kid Rock**, who recently testified in Washington,

D.C. and proudly describes himself as “a capitalist to the bone,” have acknowledged that this area of commerce requires stricter regulation to rein in bad actors. The only effective way to protect everyday consumers is to limit the ability to profit from exploitation.

When fans feel burned, they don’t just avoid resale sites—they stop attending shows altogether. That leads to empty seats, reduced venue revenue, and less foot traffic for surrounding businesses. For independent artists and venues operating on tight margins, that damage is real and lasting.

H.512 takes a practical, Vermont-style approach. It does not ban resale. It does not overreach. It establishes clear rules to prevent deceptive practices, stop speculative listings, and give consumers transparency about who they are buying from.

Just as importantly, it protects honest venues and ticket sellers who are working responsibly within their communities. Strong enforcement ensures that bad actors cannot profit by misleading Vermonters or undercutting local businesses.

H.512 helps keep tickets connected to **real fans, real venues, and real Vermont communities**. On behalf of the National Independent Talent Organization, we strongly support its passage.

Thank you for your time and for your leadership on this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathaniel Marro', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nathaniel Marro
Executive Director
National Independent Talent Organization