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## UAW, Fraternal Order of Police endorse Issue 7

**CLEVELAND-APRIL 30, 2014** - The United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) today announced their support for Issue 7.

Ken Lortz, Regional Director of the UAW, said the renewal is the best option to properly maintain and thus extend the life of Cleveland's major league sports venues.

"The UAW is going to vote yes on Issue 7 because we know that means we are voting for more jobs and a better economy," he said. "These three buildings have had a huge, positive effect on downtown Cleveland in numerous ways. Millions of people come to Cleveland every year to see games and other events in these buildings."

"It means jobs, and renewing this small tax on beer and alcohol will establish a dedicated revenue stream to pay for major repairs that are the public's responsibility," he added. "This is not a tax increase, and paying just 1.5 cents a beer to ensure we keep these buildings in major league condition is a good investment."

Issue 7 is the proposed renewal of the small tax on alcohol and cigarettes in Cuyahoga County. Proceeds from the tax – which is 1.5 cents per beer and 4.5 cents for a pack of cigarettes – would be used to finance repairs and improvements to Cleveland's three, public-owned major league sports facilities.

In 1990, the UAW opposed the original vote to enact the tax on alcohol and tobacco. Lortz said the UAW decided to endorse the renewal of the issue this year because the tax has proven itself to be good for the Greater Cleveland economy.

Jay McDonald, President of the Ohio FOP which endorsed the issue on behalf of its Cuyahoga County members, said Cleveland's major league sports facilities are a great value for Cuyahoga County.

"As police officers, we are acutely aware of just how tight city and county budgets are," McDonald said. "We recognize that the citizens of Cuyahoga County, as the owners of these facilities, have a responsibility and an obligation to fund necessary major repairs into the future."

“Without Issue 7, those repairs will still need to be made and paid for, but the funding will have to come out of city and county general funds, which are already strained and should be left to provide important services to residents,” McDonald said. “Fortunately, Issue 7 provides a solution to this funding challenge, and without raising taxes or costs.”

If the tax is not renewed, it would fall to the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County to pay for the repairs and improvements at the three venues. Cleveland would have to take money from the city’s general fund – which is used to pay for a host of basic municipal services such as police and fire protection as well as road repair.

Kevin Kelley, Cleveland City Council President, welcomed the two new endorsements.

“We continue to win the backing from a diverse group of organizations and individuals,” Kelley said. “When objective people take a few minutes to examine this issue and realize how much this small tax accomplishes, they usually support it. Having support from the UAW and the FOP is significant and we very much appreciate it.”

Residents in Cuyahoga County will decide on May 6 if the small tax on alcohol and cigarettes will be renewed. None of the revenue from the tax would go to the teams or team owners. All of the revenue would be spent improving and maintaining the buildings.

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