



FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Attorney General Candidate Rep. Crossman Encourages Cleveland City Council to Pass Legislation Removing First Energy’s Name from Browns Stadium

Representative Crossman First Urged the Browns to Remove First Energy in August 2021 through a Statehouse Resolution.

Cleveland, OH – Today, **State Representative Jeff Crossman (D-Parma)** called on Cleveland City Council to pass the resolution urging First Energy to relinquish its naming rights to the municipally owned stadium where the Cleveland Browns play football. The Browns sold the name of the stadium to First Energy for a reported \$107 Million—a substantial windfall to the Browns in 2013. Since then, First Energy has admitted to engaging in a massive bribery scandal that cost the former Ohio House Speaker, Larry Householder, his job.

“I fully support Councilman Kazy’s effort here,” said Rep. Crossman. “I urged the Browns to do the right thing last year after First Energy admitted to committing multiple felonies like bribing the Ohio House Speaker, but the Browns refused to act and I don’t understand why, since this is an easy PR and financial win for them. They should remove the name and re-sell it to a more reputable company.”

While the City of Cleveland owns the stadium, constructed and maintained at taxpayer expense, Cleveland City Council gave away the rights to sell the name of the stadium to the Browns. Originally, those funds were earmarked to paying down the stadium debt but they have been used as a profitable income stream for the Browns instead.

“This windfall should also come with some responsibility, like perhaps not rewarding a company that admitted to helping orchestrate the largest public corruption scandal in Ohio history with a prestigious place on a city-owned marquee,” said Rep. Crossman. “This would have been an act of solidarity with the community against a company that openly admitted to bribing public

officials to pass favorable bailouts and impose improper fees on our electric bills that cost us all millions each year.”

The Browns and First Energy have thus far refused to remove the name, despite the precedent set when Enron got caught in its scandal in the early 2000’s. Houston promptly removed the Enron name from what is now “Minute Maid Park.”

As time passes, we continue to learn more about the First Energy fallout. The only partially repealed House Bill 6 continues to cost Ohioans \$287,000 every day (\$250 Million total and counting) for two power plants located on the Ohio River, one of which is actually located in Madison, Indiana. Meanwhile, not one person has yet been imprisoned over what the FBI has described as the “largest public corruption scandal in Ohio history” and “the largest ongoing public corruption probe in the country.” Former Speaker Larry Householder is scheduled for trial in January 2023 and First Energy executives have yet to be indicted.

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