

Kid Rock: Put average Michiganders ahead of greedy ticket scalpers

When state lawmakers take a look at House Bill 5108, which would eliminate Michigan's law prohibiting ticket scalping, they need to remember the first concert they went to and how much fun it was.

They need to remember the crack of the first beer bottle in the parking lot and hanging with their friends, all true fans excited to see their favorite band. The thrill that runs through your body when the stage lights up, the bass guitar cranks out its first notes and the band begins to wail. That is what I want for my fans — that pure excitement, good times and memories. But HB 5108 would put all of that in jeopardy.

While I do follow politics, I'm the first to admit I'm not a political expert. But I am an expert when it comes to this issue.

Lawmakers look at this bill thinking that it will be good for the free market and that one less law means smaller government. All this bill does is take away the one measly law that venues have to protect artists and fans from scalpers who want to get rich off the backs of the working man.

The cost of going to a concert or a sporting event has gotten out of hand. A family needs to mortgage their home for a night out. It's insane. Period. High ticket prices are driven by scalpers scooping up tickets before fans have a chance to buy them and putting them on the secondary ticket market for five times the face value.

By last summer, I had had enough. For my Best Night Ever Tour, we offered fans \$20 tickets in all sections, and then on top of that, we had \$4 beers and free parking. To keep those cheap tickets available for fans, we offered them as "paperless" tickets, because it's the only way to combat scalpers. We sold out eight concerts at DTE Energy

Music Theatre, and we would have done more shows if the schedule had allowed. I think that proves that fans have no problem with their interests being protected.

The current law is the only one we have on the books to go after these guys who are destroying ticket prices. You can't begin to protect fans by taking away the one and only protection they have. If lawmakers look back on their first concert, I bet they weren't paying \$1,000, \$500, or even \$300 — that's garbage.

People say this bill is about letting the average guy go out and sell his tickets when his grandma gets sick and he can't go to the concert. Nowhere does it say you can't do that now. You occasionally just can't sell them for more than the face value. If you remove the law that helps keep tickets at the price the artists intend, it will put scalpers ahead of fans.

Times are tough. I see it every day. I live in Clarkston and have a house in Detroit, and the folks around my town have been hit hard. They can't afford those crazy ticket prices. We need to keep this law in place to protect them. I'd rather take a pay cut than have to see my fans pay outrageous amounts just to watch me perform. Going to a concert or a sporting event should be about having a good time, not about losing your shirt to a scalper.

You want to talk about the American way? It's my product, and I should be allowed to sell it how I want. I want to sell it in a way that protects my fans, not the scalpers. If my fans disagree, then they won't buy it and I'll take the hit.

Kid Rock is a Michigan native who lives in Clarkston and has a home in Detroit. He has sold more than 25 million albums in the US.