

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the House Education

Committee, my name is Abigail Burkey and this year I will be a sophomore at Westerville Central High School.

I am here today to speak in favor of House Bill 181 – the Student Teacher Liberty Act – primarily because of my negative experience with the Common Core State Standards and their harmful effect upon our education system.

I am a serious student who wants a good education. However, Common Core not only has not helped me or others, but has been a detriment to us. My purpose in coming here today is to offer a student's view of the Common Core standards. Please understand that I speak not only for myself but for most, if not all, of my friends.

Common Core has failed all students subjected to it. I was in seventh grade when Ohio adopted Common Core, and it was clear that something had changed. It seemed as though the entire year consisted of learning new names for things we already knew, and even today—3 years later—many students and parents still struggle with learning Common Core's "new way" of doing and defining things. While everything students had previously learned was being changed and renamed, good teachers were less interactive and had less input because of Common Core's emphasis on students teaching themselves during class. Inevitably, this caused and is causing damage to my education as well as many others'.

The textbooks we use are very confusing and frequently have mistakes in them. Sometimes, students can spend an amazing amount of time trying to answer one question correctly because they keep getting a "wrong answer". They use online tools and friends to help, but they cannot achieve the correct answer. Tired and discouraged the next day, they can walk into class only to be told that they were right. The book was wrong.

Typos in textbooks are a bit too frequent, and questions in books that we're supposed to be working out of are often skipped over by teachers because they're deemed confusing and make no sense- especially in math classes.

Common Core is death to curiosity and learning. Typically, there is a very strict testing schedule implemented due to these standards, and it's not unusual for this schedule to stress the learning environment. The schedule *only* works if *everything* goes *absolutely* according to plan. That means there cannot be school assemblies or snow days or substitute teachers or fire drills or any of a number of typical interruptions in a school day. Even if the majority of students in a class have limited knowledge of a subject for any reason, the most teachers can usually do is to push the test back a day or two. Sometimes, teachers will curve tests to make the grades come out better, but that does nothing to help us truly understand the subject matter. When we ask questions, it is not rare to be told that our questions don't matter because it's not what our class is supposed to be learning "at this level". This is not an appropriate response to curiosity. Telling kids that their interests and questions don't matter does nothing but kill their interests in learning. A school's place in society is not only to teach us, but also to encourage a love of learning. Common Core essentially eliminates both.

The state testing is no better. For the past three years students have been subject to too many "new and improved" changing state tests. Each year, we are unsure what to expect or how to prepare or if we even should prepare because it might not do any good. It also does not help that weeks of our time in school are taken over by these chaotic testing schedules! State testing completely disrupts learning, and compromises the amount of things we are able to get done. Classes before and after state testing are busy trying to get work done, while being crunched for time because of the tests, added onto the testing schedule. Students need more time to learn, and they should learn what they need to know for life, not a test. A *good* state test

would let us have more time to learn and let us apply what we need to know in the future on a test-not hope that what's on the test will be important to us later.

This should be an easy decision for you. Some of you will have firsthand knowledge of Common Core's destructive methodology because you have kids in your family who tell you all about it, and maybe you've even been challenged to help them with their homework. The rest of you have still heard a lot about Common Core and I doubt that you've heard anything good. This isn't nearly so much about politics as it is about saving the future of education and making sure that kids are able to learn in school. I have faith that all of us share a common interest in making education the best it can be, which means that I also have faith in you to pass this bill.

Thank you for being willing to hear my testimony today.