

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Carrie Ankney, and I thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition to House Bill 512.

I stand here today fighting this bill for my daughter, the person in my life this bill will affect the most. As her mother, it is my responsibility to instill values and pass along knowledge. This is a responsibility I take very seriously which is why this grab for control of Ohio's youth is extremely troubling.

I have to wonder why I'm standing before this committee, the Government Accountability and Oversight committee, rather than the Education and Career Readiness committee, given the nature of the bill. It's quite simple. This bill, which sponsors purport to be about "aligning Ohio's education system" and "working from cradle to the workforce" is not about education at all. It's about appointing Government Oversight and removing Accountability to your constituents, the citizens of Ohio.

It's been said that this bill does not change any policies. That is true, but what this bill does is far worse. This bill transfers 80% of responsibilities, including ALL regulatory authority from publicly elected officials to an appointed council. This institutes regulation without representation. The bedrock of American politics is individual representation through elected officials. In 1819, Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams and said "No government can continue good, but under the control of the people." To relinquish these regulatory controls to the Governor's appointee removes the control of the people from government.

In preparation for today, I read through the proponent statements which have been presented, all 9 of them. I would like to specifically address the testimony from Jamie Davis O'Leary who stated "The idea that HB 512 weakens the will of the voters is unconvincing given how few people cast votes for education board seats, know who their representatives are, or even know what the board is." While some may not wish to exercise their right to vote and partake in the political process, that is not an excuse to infringe on those rights.

I recognize that there are very difficult challenges in today's educational system. Among these are confusing mandates, complicated testing requirements, and budget constraints. The system certainly needs some work. Removing accountability to the people of Ohio and silencing their voice regarding the future of their children isn't the answer.

We are only ever one generation away from losing our fundamental rights as Americans. It is up to us to safeguard these rights at every attack. I urge you, oppose this bill and protect the rights of Americans to be free from unwanted government oversight and from regulation without representation.