

Ohio House of Representatives

Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

3-12-18

Opponent Testimony / HB 512

Testimony of Diane James, Educator, Sherlock Holmes Preparatory Academy

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Diane James and I am a teacher at Holmes Preparatory Academy in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, in Franklin County. Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony for the official record.

I worked in Higher Ed for 12 years before starting an O8 school. My children were in private preschool and attended Pickerington Public Schools; they are now homeschooled. Additionally, I graduated from East Guernsey Local School District in Guernsey County, Muskingum Perry Career Center in Muskingum County and hold two college degrees. I've had the opportunity to experience first-hand the challenges created when Ohio's school, university, and workforce development systems do not have effective collaboration. However, HB 512 is not the answer. Please allow me to explain why I am in opposition.

Combining three of Ohio's current state agencies into one mega-agency strays from the original focus of "Work Force Development". No real improvement in our "educational process" or concrete solutions for "bridging the gap between K-12 and Higher Education" are offered.

There is no need to completely restructure education in Ohio to assist K-12 students who don't intend to go to a 4-year college. We need publicly elected board members to govern policy and advocate for schools; the Ohio Department of Education does not have outside interest groups pushing private agendas. Rather than create a Cabinet Level position to oversee policy making, Ohio government must stop pushing unfunded mandates through House and Senate Bills and provide the ODE and local schools with the support and funding they need.

Career and Technical schools have been big proponents of HB 512. Their school representatives have expressed feelings of exclusion from educational goals within the State. Workforce development is critical and these schools need the opportunity to establish meetings with the ODE to address issues they see on a daily basis as they prepare Ohio's future workers. This need will not be met with an appointed individual trying to micromanage all aspects of education *and* workforce development.

Without a doubt changes are needed in the ODE. A system needs established to nurture the connection between education and workforce development. Streamlining the process of matching students to businesses does not require a new Department of Learning and Achievement 'mega-agency' that lacks public accountability. Therefore, I strongly oppose HB 512.

Thank you for your time and representation in State government.