

**House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee**  
**Opponent Testimony on House Bill 512**  
**By Gwendolyn Heckman**  
**March 14, 2018**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Gwendolyn Heckman and I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony today in opposition to HB 512.

One of the primary objections I have to HB512 is the centralization of power over education to an unelected committee reporting to the governor. The elected State BOE is mandated in our State Constitution. Stripping nearly all authority from the State BOE violates our elected representation and intrudes upon the intended authority of our elected State BOE.

We heard testimony in support of HB512 suggesting that most Ohioans don't know who their State BOE representative is and don't vote in BOE elections. This is the most disturbing arguments for support I believe I heard. I would argue a right to elected representation, in every aspect of government, is NEVER dependent upon voter turnout. If we followed that logic then I'd suggest that most Ohioans don't know who their state representative is and therefore, we should stop electing YOUR positions as well and just have the governor appoint a state congress. A Dictatorship certainly is the ultimate form of streamlining!

We also heard testimony that since voter interest is "low" for the State BOE campaigns, the candidates are left to be ravaged by special interests. Governors and their appointees certainly are not isolated from special interests. By consolidating power over the entire Ohio education system to one person, you'll make life very simple for those special interest groups. Now they can focus all their attention on one person. Maybe that is one of the intended outcomes of HB512.

Another objection I have to HB512 is the instability this will cause across all forms of education. Every time a new governor is elected he will come with his own opinions, priorities, mandates, and committee appointees and nothing to stop him from jerking the entire Ohio education system in a new direction. This insanity can then repeat itself every time a new governor is elected.

As bad as HB512 is for all forms of Ohio education, I believe it is particularly detrimental to homeschoolers. My husband and I have raised two intelligent, successful sons and, in our case, we chose to homeschool most of their K-12 years. The governor appointee would have the power to affect or deny Ohioans ability to homeschool at any time without representation from the communities.

I know I've only begun to scratch the surface of the low points to this 2,400-page bill. I believe just the concerns I presented above along with the numerous other opposition testimonies should be enough to give pause to this committee. I'm asking you to vote NO on HB512.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that the Committee might have.