

March 10, 2018

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jennifer Hancock. I am the mother of two young boys who attend public schools in Mentor, Ohio. I have also been an elementary school teacher for the past 18 years. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 512.

My fundamental concern with HB 512 is the transfer of all education policy and regulatory authority from a State Board of Education that has elected representation to an unelected and therefore unaccountable mega-agency and governor appointed director of the proposed Department of Learning and Achievement. This massive shift affects the daily operations of every form of PK-12 education in the state: traditional public school, private school, religious school, home school, community school, and career tech. It expands big government bureaucracy by eliminating transparency and accountability throughout the rule making process. HB 512 is a direct attack on Ohio families and would negatively impact every student in the state.

As a taxpayer, I want a say in who is elected to speak on behalf of the children in our state. HB 512 increases the size and scope of government by creating one mega-agency comprehensive of the Ohio Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Workforce Transformation into a new mega-agency known as the Ohio Department of Learning and Achievement.

HB 512 removes accountability to Ohio voters for state level education policy decisions by allowing the governor to appoint one agency director rather than utilizing the current model of elected/appointed State Board of Education members which are responsive and accountable to the voters of their region.

HB 512 eliminates transparency by removing all policy making authority from the elected/appointed State Board of Education and transferring all education regulatory authority into the labyrinth of the mega-agency itself. This eliminates the opportunity for public participation on proposed changes to existing regulations and accountability for decisions made. I respectfully ask this committee to vote down and kill a bill that would negatively impact the education of every student in Ohio. Protect the voice of Ohio families in the most important responsibility they have - that of educating their children

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this terrible and anti-public education bill.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Hancock
Mentor, OH