

House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 512
By Kimberly Fasbinder
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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Kimberly Fasbinder and I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony today in opposition to HB 512.

There are many reasons why I oppose HB 512.

1. This bill strips the Board of Education of 80% of its duties and gives all the decision making power to a new agency that is not voted on by the constituents. The director of this agency would hold virtually all the power when it comes to decisions regarding the education of our children. How will the director be chosen? What qualifications will be required to hold this position? How many possible shifts in policy would our children have to endure during the course of their education? Where will the oversight come from? Answering to the Governor is not enough. The Governor is not an education expert so how is he/she to be the overseer of the Director?

2. The term “cradle to career” raises many concerns. Our children are not cogs in a machine that are set to work when and where some governmental agency dictates. Their future career path can not be pre-determined simply to fill the future needs of the workforce. Think back to when you were in school. Did you see yourself in your current career? A 12-14 yr old child is just beginning to discover who they are. How are they supposed to know what career will be the best choice for them at the age of 30 when they can not even imagine life at 30? Then what happens to that 30 year old who chose the wrong career path so young and now is not trained for any other skill? We see this now when young college students have difficulty choosing a major or choose and then switch once they realize they are not satisfied with their decision. How much worse will it be when our children are being set on the path to a future career even earlier?

3. This bill is not the answer to fix our workplace issues. There are many factors that come into play regarding why businesses are struggling to find and keep suitable employees. Many of these are society issues and changes as a whole. Work ethics have changed. With the decline in pensions, employees are not as likely to stay long term with one company and retire from it. They are now more mobile, not encumbered by the need to remain in one area. If Ohio companies want to hire and keep quality employees, they are going to need to be more competitive. They are going to need to look at their salaries, benefit packages, retirement plans, and be creative with offering benefits that young employees value. This bill does not fix these problems, it simply creates new ones.

3. Another big concern is the lack of accessibility when we have an issue with policy decisions. I know it was said that we would still take our concerns to the board of education. With all due respect,, to tell us to take our concerns to them when they have been stripped of all ability to actually address our concerns is an insult. What power are you leaving them to rectify issues that arise? What procedures will be in place to address this? What recourse do we have when the board says their hands are tied because they no longer have the authority to assist us? Will the DLA or Governor be accessible to remedy problems as they arise?

4. As a homeschooling parent of young children this bill particularly concerns me in how it gives so much power to someone who is only accountable to the current Governor. Regardless of party

affiliation there is simply too much power being given to one person. Ohio, as we know, is a swing state. What happens when the sitting political party changes? The rules that govern how we school our children will potentially be at risk every election. That this bill does in fact affect homeschool families is reflected in section 3321.07 which states "If any child attends upon instruction elsewhere than in a public school such instruction shall be in a school which conforms to the minimum standards prescribed by the Department of Learning and Achievement".

5. I am also a special needs mother. From the viewpoint of some of our most vulnerable this bill is scary. What happens to our children who are deemed incapable of ever holding a job? Who will be in charge of the funding and policies that govern their education? With this bill being so focused on the workforce I have to wonder how important the education of these children will be to the DLA? How committed will the agency be to those that will never work?

I respectfully ask you to vote "NO" on HB512. I am aware that it does not change educational policy. What it does is worse. It gives the Governor and his appointee the power to change policy without the consent of the people. The children of Ohio are more important than party lines. They are our future. I ask that you please consider if this is the educational system you want for your children/grandchildren? They deserve better than this bill.

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.