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Senate Finance Committee
Sub. HB 66 Interested Party Testimony
Written Testimony
Presented by Melissa Cropper,
President Ohio Federation of Teachers
October 24, 2017

Chairman Duffey, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee. I am Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers. OFT represents more than 20,000 members who are teachers, paraprofessionals and nurses in Ohio's public schools, high education faculty and staff, and public employees who provide vital services to families and communities across our state. On behalf of our members and the children and families they serve, I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you today regarding our concerns about Substitute House Bill 66.

We appreciate that the substitute amendment to HB 66 changes the focus from mandates to creating a study committee. We agree that every college and university student should receive the full value of their investment from the school they attend.

We have several concerns about the substitute bill. First, the structure of the committee doesn't allow for input from ranking members of the House and Senate committees designated in the amendment. Equity requires that both parties have input and participation on the study committee. Second, the committee should determine how many adjunct or contingent faculty there are at each public institution. The Ohio AAUP has provided testimony about how the conversion of adjuncts to tenure faculty could be done affordably. We recommend that the study committee consider the conversion of adjuncts to full faculty. Third, the study committee should examine the role of research and tenure faculty members in advising undergraduate students on their academic options.

Adjunct faculty have a role to play in quality teaching but they also can serve as the springboard for increasing tenured faculty. However, lack of funding and increased emphasis on graduation has led higher education institutions in Ohio and nationally to rely too heavily on an increasing number of adjuncts. Many of adjuncts would like to move to a tenure faculty track.

Thank you for considering our views.