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Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Tommie Radd, a life-long professional educator and a proud product of public education in Ohio. I hold certifications, licenses and have experience in teaching, counseling (including school counseling), leadership (currently holding 4 leadership licenses), an Ohio LPC in counseling with National certifications including NCC, NCSC, CRC, and am a Senior Disability Analyst and Diplomate. I was a two-time elected school board member serving my community and a full education professor with faculty fellow research standing focusing on developmental prevention and intervention programs for students. Needless to say, I've devoted my decades long life's work to education.

My professional study, career, passion and focus is making the lives better for our children, families, schools and communities by building the best opportunities for all. You see – education is the best equalizer to help all by leveling the playing field to lift people up. A strong public school system in Ohio and beyond is the best way for that to happen. That is the reason compulsory public schools were required to have a strong citizenry who is educated to participate in and maintain a strong democracy. All of that is at risk with this continued attack on our public schools.

In 2010 Ohio public schools were ranked fifth in the USA when we had a focus on improving and advancing our public schools. Now we rank thirty-first and are moving down. My hope has been that the madness of increasing vouchers and other efforts made to attack the public school system would subside and move in the positive direction needed. Since starting with the ploy that vouchers would only be issued to those in schools labeled “failing” after 3 consecutive years, we now have a free-for-all to issue vouchers on the most suspect basis. These current bills and attacks have stopped my optimistic hope and have called me to voice my strong alarm to stop the bleeding that weakens and destroys public education and focus on sensible approaches to move schools forward.

Our public schools are the heart of my Gahanna community and I'm proud of what they offer and their efforts to keep improving to best meet challenges we all face. Every public school in Ohio can use your positive support and an effort to help them meet their challenges. It's long overdue that we need to join together and help our public schools thrive, expand funding and not deplete revenue, plus reform the broken means implemented to measure how public schools are classified and funded.

Our children who have no voice are asking that we start working, legislating and implementing plans to truly create the educational opportunities they all need and deserve. Stop this legislation and begin the improvement by at least supporting Senate Bill 89, as passed by the House.

Respectfully submitted,

Tommie R. Radd, PhD, LPC, NCC, NCSC