

## 95<sup>th</sup> House District

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State Representative

### Committees

Primary and Secondary  
Education, Vice-Chair

Agriculture and Rural  
Development

Commerce and Labor

Transportation and Public  
Safety

Joint Education Oversight  
Committee

Chairman Blessing, myself, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, I thank you for allowing my colleague and I to offer sponsor testimony on HB 154.

Simply put, HB 154 is a repeal of HB 70 from the 131<sup>st</sup> General Assembly. While the law regarding Academic Distress Commissions were passed with the best of intentions, it has failed miserably, and it is underserving kids.

It's our job to support quality education, and right now we as the state are over stepping our bounds. As this committee has heard before, presently, the ADCs function with 5 members. Three, or the majority of those members, are appointed by the state, one is appointed by the local district board, and the final one by the mayor. There is no question it is a state takeover that usurps the will of the people by disabling the duly elected school board.

This is a problem because the state is not capable of running a local district with individual and unique needs, which is why we have local school boards, and why they need empowered and helped – not sidelined. HB 154 reasserts local control. When there is a lack of local control there are many side effects. First, as I've already mentioned, is that the ADC and the appointed CEO may not know the district very well. Second is the loss of morale in the school, as well as in the community. When the community support for a school is lost the school suffers even more. Then there is no way for the community to reengage in the school because the power has been taken away from the school board, and that can only return if the school district improves, which after years of trying- none have.

This bill puts a focus back on community by establishing Community Learning Centers for failing schools. Now, we're not saying for the state to shirk its responsibilities and have no involvement. This bill requires the Ohio Department of Education to use their immense resources in concert with the school districts, but the state is not running the show.

The short of it is that we need to do right by our kids. The current model of state control is not working, and shows no signs of being able to work. Right now we have some busted pipes under the sink. We're not just shutting off the water, we're also fixing the broken pipes. Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary & Secondary Education Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify to HB 154 and look forward to your questions.