

Primary and Secondary Committee
Proponent Testimony for HB 154
Prepared by Andre Washington APRI
April 30, 2019

Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Committee, I am Andre Washington, President of the Ohio A. Phillip Randolph Institute. I am writing in support of HB 154.

Inspired by this success, Randolph and Rustin founded A. Philip Randolph Institute in 1965 to continue the struggle for social, political and economic justice for all working Americans. APRI is an Organization of Black Trade Unionist to Fight for Racial Equality and Economic Justice. We have local chapters in Akron, Canton, Stark County, Dayton, Ohio State, Trumbull County, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Franklin County, Greater Toledo, and Youngstown.

APRI is submitting this testimony on behalf of our members because we live in communities that are subject to state takeover. We oppose the current state takeover plan, a last-minute amendment included in HB 70. HB 70 was a bill intended to help address the non-academic needs of children living in poverty.

We support returning control for education back to elected local school boards and providing a guidance for how to develop a building by building approach to school turnaround. No legislative body should usurp the power of other elected officials. Focusing on buildings is important because while most focused-on Youngstown City Schools overall 2014-2015 Report Card grade, the year the "Youngstown" Plan was amended into HB 70. Youngstown school had two early college high schools that received a B and a C and the number of students passing the third-grade reading test earned the district a K-3 Literacy Improvement grade of C.

Clearly, something was working. Did more need to be done, yes and we think the revised HB 154 will help unite the community and educators in a more focus way, by having teachers, principals, and community stakeholders coming together to develop turnaround plans using evidence models that successfully help improve student outcomes and building climate.

We urge you to end the Academic Distress Commission and the current turnaround model, AND PASS HB 154.