



Representative Lisa Sobecki
House District 45

Representative Phil Robinson
House District 6

House Bill 336 Joint Sponsor Testimony
House Primary & Secondary Education Committee
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Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Jones, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB) 336, to reinstate the Joint Education Oversight Committee, commonly known as JEOC. JEOC was established in 2015 during the 131st General Assembly, and eliminated through this GA's Operating Budget, HB 166. HB 336 has bipartisan support and we believe JEOC is important to Ohio education policy.

JEOC was a bipartisan, bicameral body overseeing emerging education policy issues in Ohio. The committee comprised of members of both the majority and minority caucuses, and consists of 5 senators and 5 representatives. The most current committee makeup was chaired by Representative Bob Cupp and with Senator Teresa Fedor served as the ranking member. I want to take a moment and thank Representative Cupp and Senator Fedor for their leadership.

JEOC provided non-partisan, fact-based, and in-depth analysis of the K-12 education system at a great value to the tax payer. The committee staff consisted of an executive director, a researcher, and a staff fellow, who produced research, which quality cannot be matched simply by Legislative Service Commission (LSC). I want to be clear here. LSC does great work and is a benefit to the state legislature. However, it is not feasible that LSC can duplicate the level of expertise, and knowledge of the education system in Ohio that JEOC provided. We've included a handout with our testimony today which details the work JEOC conducted these past few years.

For Fiscal Year 2020 to 2021, 28.1 % of the Operating Budget funds K-12 education across Ohio which roughly totals \$19.3 billion. There are many aspects of education in Ohio which should be looked at and reviewed. JEOC was a valuable tool in the toolbox for legislators to use.

For example, JEOC was in the middle of diving into the state report card, an important issue that greatly impacts schools, communities, and our children in multiple ways. With so many in Ohio dissatisfied with the state report cards but uncertain or in disagreement on what to change about

them, it's crucial the legislature work to solve this is issue. The public hearings and research from JEOC on this issue are critical to helping fix the system and getting it right on the first try. JEOC hearings and research are important to developing solutions to the most difficult education issues, such as school funding, early childhood education, graduation requirements, standardized testing, and other key issues.

Another reason we need JEOC is the types of policy conversations it creates. The nature of JEOC helps create both bipartisan and bicameral ideas and solutions to crafting legislation. Party divisions and the already separated parallel work of the House and Senate can be a common difficulty passing any law at the Statehouse. JEOC helps bring both chambers and caucuses together from the start to work on education issues together. As much as I would like to think all sides could come together without a committee, we all know it does not always work out that way. Let's not spoil this opportunity to continue bicameral and bipartisan conversations.

Whether it is the specialized research, the importance of education needing extra attention because of how it impacts the budget and our children's future, or how it improves and streamlines bipartisan and bicameral policymaking; JEOC seems to us to be an essential tool for providing the best information to create education policy.

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Jones, and members of committee, once again we thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify before you today. We ask for your support of HB 336 and are happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.