

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 322.

My name is Brad Homoelle, and I am the head of the Science Department at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, OH. I have been teaching high school since the 2000-2001 school year and hold National Board Certification in the area of Adolescent/Young Adult Science education. I have been a mentor and facilitator to Resident Educators in our school for the past six years and have been a RESA assessor since 2014. Through my involvement with this program, I have seen its many benefits firsthand and I appreciate the opportunity to share my experience with you.

The greatest benefit of the RESA is that it acts as a safeguard for the students in our State by assuring that all children, no matter where they live or attend school, will have teachers that are competent and possess the skills that will allow our students to succeed. Although administrators within a school can, and should, evaluate the faculty within their building, it is possible for other concerns to cloud their judgement or lead them to retain teachers who are not effective. These concerns could include not wanting to deal with the paperwork of terminating a teacher's contract and letting inertia take over, keeping an incompetent teacher in the classroom for far too long. By having a trained, outside, assessor evaluate a teacher, as is done in the RESA process, the focus of the assessment can be solely on whether a teacher has met the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession and possesses the ability to effectively educate the students in front of them.

Even though I have been an assessor for several years, each year I and every other assessor must recertify to make sure that we can still accurately assess a teacher's classroom practice without subjectivity or bias. This recertification involves a re-familiarization with Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession and the observable behaviors that indicate that a teacher has successfully met these standards. After this, we score three training entries to assure that our scores are similar to those of a group of master scorers who came to a consensus. If they are not, we can make another attempt with a different set of training entries. However, if we still do not demonstrate that we can accurately assess the training entries, we are not allowed to assess the RESA and are removed from the pool of assessors. If we do pass and begin assessing teachers' entries, our scores are tracked by a scoring administrator. If any discrepancies are found with our scores, we are not allowed to score any further entries. It is because of this rigorous training, certification, and oversight that I can assure you that the scores provided by the RESA assessors are legitimate and provide an honest reflection of a person's skills as an instructor.

If House Bill 322 passes and we lose the ability to set and enforce uniform standards for the teaching profession throughout the State, I fear that the education of children in our communities will be threatened, especially those who live in low-income urban and rural areas. In my role as a RESA assessor, I have seen some truly marvelous lessons that engaged students, calling them to growth, and provided them with knowledge that expanded their worlds. However, I have also seen lessons by people who had little content knowledge, who demanded very little from their students, and who were not able to manage a classroom. This adversely affected the education of all the students in the class, not just those misbehaving. Every one of these teachers had two years when their schools were to provide support and guidance to them in the form of mentoring by a trained peer and all of them had gone through an education program or an alternative path to licensure. Even with this, they were still lacking in the basic knowledge and skills needed to design and deliver a successful lesson that is aligned with accepted standards and is rigorous. I have little doubt that, without the RESA and an outside assessor evaluating them, they would still be in those classrooms and the students that passed through those rooms would not receive the education they deserve.

In closing, I want to thank you for your time and attention. House Bill 322 would be detrimental to the future of education in our State, and I recommend that you oppose it for the reasons stated above.

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