

Proponent Testimony – 4th Grade Students at Birchwood Schools In support of HB 59: Making April Ohio Native Plant Month

Good afternoon. We are Lorn, Jonathan, Manya, and Joshua, and we are fourth grade students at Birchwood School of Hawken in Cleveland. We are so grateful for the opportunity to share with you today why we think that designating April as Ohio Native Plant Month is so important.

At school, we have been learning about how pollinator populations are declining and how important native plants are to our native pollinators, like bees, butterflies, and moths. These pollinators' numbers are going down as we speak, which is really sad. We know that native plants are an important part of Ohio ecosystems and that native plants provide a great habitat and food source for many animals. We have also learned how important pollinators are to humans. For example, without pollinators, many fruits and vegetables would not be able to reproduce and provide us with food. We have been learning about which native plants are important for different pollinators, so that we can create a pollinator garden at our school in the spring.

We believe that having a Native Plant Month will help raise awareness about native plants and how they are important. We could use Native Plant Month to educate people about native plants in many ways. My school could help educate others about Ohio's native plants by researching and making posters. We could make videos to share on YouTube and hold fundraisers to raise money for our garden or to donate to places that help native plants. Maybe we could convince other schools to plant pollinator gardens full of native plants. We could turn our garden into a teaching garden and have workshops to teach our community about how to plant with native plants and why they are important.

During school, we could learn a lot from the native plants in our garden. Having April as Ohio Native Plant Month could encourage teachers to hold classes outside and observe native plants and the pollinators they attract. We could also learn about what kind of soil different plants need and learn about photosynthesis by watching the native plants around our school. Other subject classes could use our garden too. In math class, younger students could measure distances between plants, and art classes could make paintings of the flowers in the garden. In fourth grade, we could get the younger kids excited about plants and pollinators and teach them how to help wildlife and native plants. We know that fewer and fewer people know about plants these days, and having a Native Plant Month could give students a reason to learn how to care for and identify native plants.

In conclusion, having a designated Ohio Native Plant Month would be good for Ohio's ecosystems, pollinators, students, and communities. And of course, for the native plants! We hope you agree that this would be a very good thing for Ohio. Thank you for your time.