

Co-chairpersons Cupp and Patterson and members of the Finance Primary & Secondary Education Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on HB 166. I am Kathy Demers, Superintendent of the Monroe Local School District in Butler and Warren Counties.

Our school Treasurer, Holly Cahall, is with me in support of our testimony and to answer any questions you may have.

We support the school funding changes in HB 166 that eliminates the funding cap and would fund the Monroe Local School District equitably with other districts.

Currently, the Monroe Local School District is severely affected by this funding cap. While some districts in Ohio receive more than 100% of the state formula funding, our district receives just 55% of the funding that it would be entitled to under the current, traditional funding formula. In other words, Monroe has 2,848 students, but the state funds us as if we only have 1437 students. **Monroe is in the top ten Districts as the most capped in the State of Ohio.**

While Monroe delivers a high quality education to our students, this reduction in funding seriously reduces the academic, athletic, and cultural opportunities that we provide to our students and their families and increases the local tax burden on our residents and businesses. The City has experienced tremendous economic development success, but the revenue from these projects will not be realized for several years. Those same businesses are eager to partner with us and are asking for curriculum and technology experiences to provide to our students. However, this is an opportunity we cannot afford as a result of the funding cap.

Our community is passionate about our school district's success. Residents consistently pass operating levies where taxpayer funds must make up for the lack of state funding under the cap. As a result, our effective millage rate now ranks us in the top 20% of public schools in Ohio. Although we value the community support, we believe that the money coming directly from our residents through higher property taxes is unfair to them and to our students, given that the same financial constraints and expectations are not placed on other school systems.

Monroe Local Schools is appreciative of your sacrifice in time and attention to remedying this disparity in the school funding formula. We ask for HB 166 to pass this committee, the Finance Committee, and the House with the language eliminating the funding caps intact.

Monroe is excited about how the proposed legislation will have an *immediate* positive impact on our students, residents and businesses, and we appreciate your consideration.

Co-Chair Cupp and Patterson and members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on the House Bill 166. I would be happy to address any questions.