

Bree Obhof Testimony (2 pages)

Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Craig, Members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee and Special Guests, thank you for having us here to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 123.

My name is Bree Obhof. I am 12 years old and I live in Medina, Ohio. I am in the 6th grade and I attend St. Francis Xavier School. I have been interested in fossils and paleontology since I was three years old! I watched dinosaur shows, read dinosaur books, and played dinosaur games.

My family has always supported my interest in Paleontology, and I became even more interested in fossils when we visited the Cleveland Museum of Natural History together and saw the dinosaur skeletons! As my interest in ancient life grew, I learned more about the amazing creatures of the past. Last year, I was on my schools' Elementary Science Olympiad team. My partner and I won first place in the fossils event. This year I am a member of our Middle School team and, at competition this March, our team has qualified to go to Columbus and compete at the State level. The more I learn, the more I want to be a paleontologist.

I love going to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History with my family, where I can see real fossils and learn more about their lives and times. It was at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History where I first saw fossils of *Dunkleosteus terrelli*. It was an amazing fish that was bigger than a great white shark!

Dunkleosteus terrelli lived 360 million years ago during the Late Devonian period (called the 'Age of the Fishes') when much of the

planet and most of Ohio was covered with a tropical sea.

Dunkleosteus terrelli was the largest sea creature at the time (as long as 30 feet plus) with huge, powerful jaws and swam over most of the area now in Ohio. It has been estimated that his bite was more powerful than that of a T-Rex dinosaur. What made *Dunkleosteus terrelli* different from similar fish was that he had self-sharpening blades of bone that worked like giant scissors that sliced rather than crushed its prey.

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History has a model of what *Dunkleosteus terrelli* looked like in real life. And then, I learned that these fossils at the Museum weren't found in another part of the world, but right here in Ohio! *Dunkleosteus terrelli* may have died out millions of years ago, but he's world famous, with most of the important fossils found in the great state we call home.

I hope that *Dunkleosteus terrelli* will be named our State Fossil Fish as I know other students will find *Dunkleosteus terrelli* as wonderful and amazing as I do. Making '*Dunkleosteus terrelli*' Ohio's State Fossil Fish will encourage learning about science. If it was the State Fossil Fish, more students would learn about it the way they learn about other Ohio Icons. As the most important fossils of *Dunkleosteus terrelli* were found in Ohio's Late Devonian shale and remain in Ohio at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History makes *Dunkleosteus terrelli* a part of Ohio's great story.

Thank you for listening to my testimony. I am now proud to introduce Dr. William J. Hlavin, President and CEO of Bass Energy, a Director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and an expert on the fossil fish and sharks of the Late Devonian age, including *Dunkleosteus terrelli*. Dr. Hlavin has done a lot of research and written many scientific papers about *Dunkleosteus terrelli*.