



Testimony in Support of Charter Facilities

Good morning, Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Phillips, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 64.

I am LK Williams, a retired teacher from Boardman, Ohio and a member of StudentsFirst Ohio. I am here in support of the public charter school facilities provisions in House Bill 64.

Children deserve a quality education regardless of the type of school attended. When those schools receive public funding of any sort, those funds should have public oversight. We need to be sure that all public schools have enough funding to provide suitable facilities. Currently, charters face obstacles when trying to construct, purchase, or lease such facilities. Therefore, public charter schools often settle for less-than-ideal spaces – such as former stores, office buildings, and etc.

Schools can have broad benefits for neighborhoods and cities, and this is true of public charters as well. Washington, D.C.'s programs have allowed public charter schools to successfully attract private investment to neighborhoods that was not otherwise available. By renovating underutilized or blighted buildings, public charter schools helped revitalize neighborhoods and attracted new residents and businesses.

Ohio's House Bill 64 increases the per pupil funding for public charter school facilities from \$100 to \$200. In addition, the bill creates a \$25 million state facilities fund for public charter schools with sponsors rated exemplary. This financing of charter school facilities can reach beyond the school, just as in the case of Washington, D.C., helping families and entire communities. Additionally, allowing public charter schools to purchase surplus facilities can be a revenue source for a financially struggling school district.

The problem with public financing is the need for public oversight. Having worked in six public school districts in two states, I never had my salary tied to my performance as it impacted measurable student learning, and levies were not passed based on schools performing well or promising to **ensure** improved student achievement.

Charters exist to boost student achievement by giving each student the opportunity to do their best – it should be their reason for being. The failure of public education for those in the inner city is well known. Giving students a chance to succeed in **an environment that supports learning** is important. It tells the students that who they are and what they are doing is valued and respected.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I hope you support the public charter school facilities provisions of HB 64 and all legislation that seeks to ensure quality school options for Ohio's kids.

