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OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

June 20, 2017

House Education Committee

House Bill 21 - Proponent Testimony

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education Committee, I am Matthew Dotson with the Ohio Education Association's (OEA) Government Relations Division. On behalf of the OEA's 124,000 members, thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 21.

Ohio's system of verifying the residency of charter school students is inefficient, invites inaccuracy and places an undue burden on local school districts. Accurate reporting of the residency of students who attend a charter school is important because it determines how much funding a school district will lose as a result a student's transfer to a charter school.

Currently, the responsibility for verifying the district residency of charter school students falls almost exclusively on individual school districts. This approach is flawed because school districts cannot always get access to the proof of residency a student has submitted to a charter school. Further, school districts lose contact with these students and are not always notified if a student subsequently changes residency. A more fair and logical system is needed.

There are documented instances of school funding being taken from the wrong districts to pay for charter school students. This needs to be fixed.

House Bill 21 (R-Steve Hambley) seeks to solve this problem by giving charter schools the primary responsibility for verifying charter student residency, while still allowing school districts to review and dispute erroneous residency claims.

The OEA supports the common-sense reforms in House Bill 21. Improving the residency verification process will serve the educational interests of school districts, charter schools, students and taxpayers. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. I am available for any questions you may have.

