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Broadcast Educational Media Commission
Financial Institutions, Housing & Urban Development
Higher Education & Workforce Development
Education & Career Development

State Representative Catherine D. Ingram

Sponsor Testimony - House Bill 224
Education and Career Readiness
October 24th, 2017

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairwoman Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and my esteemed colleagues of the Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 224.

The need for this legislation came to my attention from a constituent named Jessica Shelly, the Food Services Director at Cincinnati Public Schools. Ms. Shelly has spoken to me at length regarding the scenario school districts across the state find themselves in daily: throwing perfectly good food items in the trash—wasting taxpayer dollars when instead they could be providing an additional source of nutrition for food-insecure students.

Under Ohio administrative code, school cafeterias are required to dispose of food items such as milk cartons, yogurt containers, and low fat cheese sticks that have been served onto student lunch trays, but that have not been consumed or opened. These items can still safely be consumed—the USDA encourages the practice, and Vermont, Indiana, Colorado, and Michigan already implement similar programs—but because of Ohio food temperature control regulations, these items end up in school trash cans.

These food items have, in the past, been saved, protected in cooling stations, and re-served on school “share tables”—tables for students to take additional snacks which are incredibly popular with students. This legislation allows schools to retrieve unopened and unused food items before students leave the cafeteria, and safely reserve the items to students who could benefit from the additional nutritious snacks. This will also save tax dollars that would literally be thrown away.

This legislation is permissive and in no way a mandate. Under this legislation, schools will be given the option to prevent food waste as they see fit. This legislation is also bipartisan, with 19 cosponsors, almost evenly split amongst Republicans and Democrats.

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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairwoman Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Education and Career Readiness Committee, I thank you for your time, and I hope to have the support of the committee behind House Bill 224. I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

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