

Proponent Testimony House Bill 246
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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor: thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 246. House Bill 246 is a bill that has been introduced to support county boards of developmental disabilities in meeting the educational needs of children that attend county board operated schools. If passed this legislation would provide county boards of DD access to Ohio Facilities Construction Commission dollars that would assist county boards in providing updated classroom facilities for their respective students.

Typically the financial responsibility to maintain and modernize county board of developmental disabilities schools has largely fallen upon the local boards. Providing county boards of DD the opportunity to access this funding will alleviate the strain on local resources. Accessing these funds allows boards of DD to use more of their local dollars to provide matching funds for Home and Community Based waiver services. In Mahoning County our school will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2018. Having opened its doors in 1968 Leonard Kirtz School has been a vital part of Mahoning County's educational system for nearly half a century. As the school ages there are updates/ upgrades that could be made to the facility that would be of great benefit to the children of Mahoning County. There have been incredible technological advancements to assist with the education of children with developmental disabilities, combining local funds with facilities construction commission dollars will help support the attainment of resources that promote a better learning environment. These funds would allow every county

board that operates a school to enhance the education of the children in their county, thus promoting a more well-rounded educational experience for all students. Support of this legislation is yet another opportunity for Ohio to show the rest of the country that we are committed to enhancing the lives of all citizens. Providing the best educational environment for students can boost learning and lead to greater success in adulthood.

Beyond the typical classroom setting these funds could be used to renovate county board schools to create safer facilities. Outside of traditional education services many students enrolled in county board schools also rely on their educational support staff to meet other needs. Upgrades to items such as lift equipment could help reduce the risk of injury to students and staff alike. Equipment upgrades that create a safer, more efficient space allows more time for the staff to focus on the educational goals of each student.

I would ask for your support of House Bill 246 as this legislation has the ability to have a positive impact on numerous communities across the state of Ohio. This bill expands upon the commitment Ohio has made to promoting safe, modern learning environments.

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, once again I thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for this bill.