

Proponent Testimony
House Bill 246
House Education and Career Readiness Committee
December 12, 2017

Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Education and Career Readiness Committee, my name is Bridget Gargan, and I am executive director of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB). OACB advocates on behalf of all 88 county boards of developmental disabilities. I am here today here to testify in support of House Bill 246.

County boards of developmental disabilities are unique among Ohio's public human services agencies and schools in that they are responsible for supporting people in every stage of their lives. No other agency or school has this lifetime requirement. Because of this, county boards need to ensure that they are always maximizing available funds and using their limited resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

House Bill 246 is a grassroots initiative brought forth by local legislators and county board representatives who are concerned about the educational futures of students with developmental disabilities. OACB applauds the efforts of Representatives Jeff Rezabek and John Bocchieri to create equity by permitting county board schools to access to reimbursement from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

Of the 45 counties operating school programs for students with developmental disabilities, none are able to access funding from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC). Despite providing school services of students under their supervision in much the same way as traditional school programs, these county board schools are treated as second-class entities in the Ohio Revised Code. House Bill 246 would rectify this inconsistency and give students with developmental disabilities the same access to state building funds that their non-disabled peers currently enjoy.

Since sponsor testimony was offered in September, numerous changes have been made to the bill to address concerns expressed by stakeholders, including:

- Clarifying those eligible facilities must be K-12 school programs.
- Requires that OFCC set aside 2% of its classroom facilities appropriation (as it does for Joint Vocational School Districts) for disbursement to DD classroom facilities. For FY17-18, 2% of those funds would have amounted to \$12 million.
- Specifies that ranking for assistance will be determined using the county's taxable value of real and public utility property divided by the number of enrolled students in each DD program.
- Specifies that at least one DD facility will receive funding per year, so long as at least one DD facility elects to receive assistance.
- Specifies that the local cost share shall be 1% of a DD board's ranking, and that money already on hand can be used to pay this cost.
- Retains the maintenance payment of 1.5% of current insurance value of facilities required by OFCC of JVSs for DD boards accepting funds

We believe these changes have made the bill much stronger and moves policies more in line with those that apply to other facilities across the state eligible for OFCC funds. As such, we respectfully ask for your support for House Bill 246 to help provide equity to schools operated by county boards of developmental disabilities in Ohio. Thank you for your time and attention today.