

NIRAJ J. ANTANI
42ND DISTRICT

Vice Chair- Committee on Higher
Education & Workforce Development

Committee on Health

Committee on Energy &
Natural Resources

Committee on Community &
Family Advancement

Committee on Aging & Long Term Care



Ohio General Assembly
House of Representatives
Columbus

VERN RIFFE CENTER
77 SOUTH HIGH STREET, 11TH
FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OH 43215-6111

—
T: (614) 466-6504

—
F: (614) 719-6966

—
REP42@OHIOHOUSE.GOV

Sponsor Testimony House Bill 738
Education and Career Readiness Committee
November 27th, 2018

Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 738, which would require the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and the Department of Education to study the status of school buildings regarding air conditioning, accessibility, and school safety.

Our schoolchildren deserve an adequate learning environment. We need to prioritize creating good conditions to make our school buildings safe and accessible. Earlier this year, many schools in Ohio were forced to close for a day or more due to the lack of air conditioning. After learning this, I sent a letter to the Department of Education with a 30 day deadline to provide a cost estimate to air condition school buildings in Ohio that did not already have it. I was told by both OFCC and ODE that the data I requested was not available. This data is a necessity in taking steps to make sure that our schoolchildren have a safe environment to learn in. This led me to introduce this bill, because we need to start taking steps to make schools proficient in regard to air conditioning, accessibility, and safety.

HB 738 also requires that once the study is completed by OFCC and ODE, that 25% of future school construction money be dedicated to air conditioning, disability accessibility, and safety. This funding will help provide these basic necessities to schools who currently lack the means to obtain them. This provision was included to begin a discussion on reforming the way we fund school construction in Ohio. Speaking to the school districts that I represent, it is evident that the way we fund school construction in Ohio is broken and must be dramatically reconfigured. In the 21st Century, it is unacceptable for our school buildings to not be air conditioned. Even if the temperature is not high enough to warrant a closure or early dismissal, the heat will create a hostile environment for both teaching and learning. HB 738 would help start the process of creating good conditions for the students of Ohio to learn in.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 738. I would be happy to take any questions.