



Office of State Representative Stephanie Howse
House District II

Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 652
House Education and Career Readiness Committee
Tuesday, December 4, 2018

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on House Bill 652.

Ohio has an educational achievement gap problem. In 2015, we had the ninth-largest reading gap between the highest and lowest performing schools in our state.¹ We had the second-largest achievement gap in math and the fourth largest gap in high school graduation rates.² This is an unacceptable reality that needs to be addressed. This is not an issue that can be solved by one piece of legislation; it is something that needs to be continuously worked on, with different methods used to try to address the obvious and not so obvious causes.

This bill is one line of attack on this enormous issue. This bill would create a state index that would be called the Loving State Index. The index would be a ranking of the municipal corporations in Ohio based on how they provide the critical supports that are vital to student academic success. The Loving State Index Commission would be created to determine the criteria for the ranking system and to rank municipalities. Some examples of these critical supports that are vital to academic success are early childhood education participation, advanced high school curriculum, access to mental health services, and affordable housing.

Each of these different factors have an impact on academic success and by tracking what areas municipalities are good at and where they need improvement, we will be able to better grasp how to help improve the achievement of students overall. Additionally, by ranking the municipalities, we will be able to better assess the gaps in opportunity for low income and minority individuals. Understanding those gaps are important if we want to improve our achievement gap and help students in the lowest performing schools have the best opportunity to be successful. Finally, ranking the municipal corporations and publishing the results will help inform Ohioans about this issue and also let them know what their municipality needs to do to improve its ranking.

¹ Valerie Strauss, The Washington Post "The education mess in Ohio under Gov. John Kasich"
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/02/10/the-education-mess-in-ohio-under-gov-john-kasich/?utm_term=.0b3992bb4368

² *Id.*



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Giving parents and community members that knowledge will allow them to make informed decisions and participate in the local government better. This Index will allow Ohio to take a step in the right direction to understand and then fix the achievement gap between schools so that every student will have the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Thank you, Chairman Brenner, and members of the committee, for providing me the opportunity to deliver sponsor testimony on this bill. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.