

Thank you, Chairman Cupp and the Committee on Primary & Secondary Education for the opportunity to testify this morning. This is a welcome characteristic of our State government, hearing from its citizens. There are three areas I would like to address this morning.

First, is the general funding for the Springfield Local School District in Summit County. The proposed budget for the biennial years 2017-2019 proposes no financial increase for our district. This will actually equate to a loss of \$2,114 for our district under the proposal for FY17-18 and zero gain/loss for FY18-19. Our district cannot afford this. The 2017-2019 State budget proposes that ten school districts in Summit County have increases, four have losses, and three have a zero gain/loss, which is a loss in practical terms (FY 17-18 core aid). This equates to nine increases, two losses, and six zero gain/loss (FY 18-19 core aid).

Making the mix even more interesting for our district is the status of the Free & Reduced lunch program. In the Springfield

district before the recession of 2008-2009, we had approx. 25-27% of our population on free & reduced lunches. During and after the recession, that percentage jumped to approx. 66% and in the years of 2013-2014 - 2015-2016 was 58% & 55% respectively. This leads to the discussion of district valuation. While the Springfield Local School district has property valuation that tends to be positive for industrial and commercial property, those do not necessarily translate into positive valuation for residential properties, nor do they speak to the affluence of the residents of the Springfield district. The residents of our district are struggling and there are many indicators. The indicator of increased free & reduced lunches is one and another is poverty rising in our district. While this level may be showing signs of leveling off, it is still high at approx. 14.8 % in Summit County. The Springfield Local Schools cannot afford to have a budget freeze from the state for the next two years. It is imperative that the State increase funding to the Springfield Local Schools.

The second area I would like to address is that funding for

school districts has been affected by the charter school dilemma. In addition to losing funding from the state, Springfield Local Schools loses approx. \$1,283,000 a year to charter schools. Of the 18 charters that pull dollars from our district, only two had better performance than Springfield on the state report card, the rest either had below our performance indicator, or were NR (not rated). What is even more discouraging is that of the \$1.2 mil taken by the charter schools, \$491k is a direct subsidy from our local taxpayers, yet they have no say in the dispensing of those funds.

I have spent my career in the rubber, wire & cable, hose & tubing and polymer arenas for over 35 years. In my opinion, charter schools have the same basic effect as the foreign dumping of goods & services in our country. While I support parental choice, I do not support the uneven playing field in the traditional/charter school environment. It appears that charters do not have the same requirements as traditional schools. The unfortunate circumstance is the "robbing of Peter to pay Paul effect".

Wouldn't every industry like to be subsidized to compete against its rivals? Why do public schools have to give up their operational dollars to support their competitors?

The third issue affecting our students is career and technical education. Springfield Local School District is joined by three other school districts at the Portage Lakes Career Center. Their budget is also scheduled to remain flat & decrease over the next two years. Career and technical education is an important option for students needing to find viable alternatives in the skilled trades fields. As a person who has worked in multiple industries, it is critical to support students who may not necessarily be college bound. The Ohio Association of Career Technical Education Memorandum commented on the State's plan on behalf of the CTE community. Here are a few items of mention:

- Strengthening the existing programs of CTE, not expanding them into the 7th grade.
- Having a co-op of stakeholders in those skilled fields

- Working with the CTE schools to develop types of apprentice programs.

In addition to strategies preventing high school dropout, CTE alternatives can be a valued asset in keeping students in school and teaching them a valued skill for productive employment.

Along with dropout prevention, preventing absenteeism plays a major role in both traditional schooling and CTE. Absenteeism costs industries billions in lost production and innovation. In my own observations working in multiple industries, absenteeism hurts all of our communities. CTE and the alternatives it offers would be a wise investment to help curb drop out & absenteeism. Please reconsider your funding decisions for the Springfield Local School District and the Portage Lakes Career Center.

Finally, I would also like to address state testing. While I don't disagree that summative, big stakes assessments *can* be a way to measure progress in student achievement, they are not the only way. A need for sound testing is grossly needed, but testing

that takes up to three weeks of a school calendar year is way too long.

In conclusion, I have three requests to bring forward for the Springfield Local School District. First, would be a stipend or increase in funding equal to the loss of funds lost to charter schools each year. Second, we also need to increase funding to CTE to cover at least the cost of inflation, to give us the best opportunity to teach skilled trades to students who want to enter the work force directly after high school/technical education. Third, let's move away from the current assessment program that has teachers teaching to the state test, then assessing, and teaching to the next test. Shortening the timetable of testing, not to mention the district wide loss of computer resources from the rest of the student body during these times because our district does not have enough technology resources for everyone to test at the same time, would be valuable to the learning process.

Finally, I would like to thank you, Chairman Cupp and the assigned Committee, very much for listening, and also for giving

me the opportunity to speak. I hope you will consider the requests I have made on behalf of the Springfield Local Schools & Portage Lakes Career Center. Have a good day.