Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify today. My name is Jeanne Melvin. I am a retired teacher with three dozen years of experience as an educator in Hilliard City Schools. My three daughters graduated from Worthington City Schools, and my oldest grandchild will begin her public school education there next year. I am a board member of *Public Education Partners (PEP)*, a statewide grassroots advocacy group for public school districts and the children and families that they serve.

PEP strongly supports Senate Bill 39 as an effort to increase oversight and transparency of online charter schools in Ohio. SB 39 contains rational ways to help ODE fully account for e-schools' attendance and the tax dollars they receive from school districts throughout the Buckeye State.

It's just plain common sense to ask all e-schools to actually "provide," rather than simply "offer," 920 hours of learning opportunities to students in each academic year. Senate Bill 39 affirms that.

It's quite obvious that e-schools should keep accurate records of how long each student is actively participating in learning in every 24-hour period and that teachers who are licensed by ODE need to certify the accuracy of student participation logs. Senate Bill 39 mandates that.

It's simply more transparent and fiscally responsible if e-school advertisements bought with public funds would include a disclaimer with the school's most recent state report card grade. Senate Bill 39 requires that.

Hilliard City Schools is an excellent school district where I taught for 36 years. Hilliard's state funding last year was $2,883 per student, and a total of $2,586,406 was transferred from the district to charter schools. Even though Hilliard City Schools converted its central office space into a state-of-the-art *Innovative Learning Center* for online learning, overseen by licensed teachers, five of those charter schools were e-schools which all received more state funding per student

than HCSD. For example, the Electronic Classroom for Tomorrow received $7,086 per student, so $459,453 in local tax dollars was transferred from Hilliard to ECOT that year. Ohio Virtual Academy received $7,004 per student, so $182,898 in local tax dollars was transferred from Hilliard to OVA.

Worthington City Schools is a highly-regarded school district where my children received an outstanding education. Worthington's state funding last year was $1,909 per student, and a total of $1,622,289 was transferred from the district to charter schools. Even though Worthington City Schools created *Worthington Academy*, a safe environment facilitated by certified teachers that integrates technology and personalized instruction, four of those charter schools were e-schools which all received more state funding per student than WCSD. For example, the Electronic Classroom for Tomorrow received $7,086 per student, so $340,198 in local tax dollars was transferred from Worthington to ECOT that year. Ohio Virtual Academy received $7,004 per student, so $81,066 in local tax dollars was transferred from Worthington to OVA.

One would agree that when the Auditor issues a Finding for Recovery from an audit of an e-school, then it's very logical that the money should be returned to the school district from where it originally came. Senate Bill 39 specifies that.

If both brick-and-mortar and digital charter schools are going to continue to co-exist with public school districts, then Ohio's charter school laws need to be strengthened with precise rules and regulations that remove any chance of profiteers benefiting from loopholes or other improprieties.

Two years ago, the Ohio Legislature passed House Bill 2, a charter school reform bill that brought some increased transparency and accountability to the charter school industry. The sensible provisions in Senate Bill 39 need to be a key part of the state's ongoing charter school improvement plan.

Ohioans are counting on it.