



**Senate Education Committee
SB 34 Opposition Testimony
Ohio School Boards Association
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
June 27, 2018**

Chairman Lehner, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Jay Smith, Deputy Director of Legislative Services for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). Joining me today for this testimony and in answering your questions is Barbara Shaner, Advocacy Specialist for the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO). Thomas Ash, Director of Governmental Relations for the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) joins us in our position but was unable to be here today. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today to express our opposition to SB 34.

Our three organizations represent public school district boards of education, superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers, and other school business officials from around the state. On behalf of our members, we oppose SB 34. The bill requires all public schools and chartered nonpublic schools to open for instruction after Labor Day unless a district hosts a public hearing 30 days prior to adopting a resolution specifying its start date.

SB 34 presents itself as an additional state mandate that seeks to impose the will of the General Assembly on a matter that is more properly the authority of the locally elected boards of education and the staff of our schools. This new requirement interferes with the local flexibility boards of education require in meeting the educational needs of students. Further, SB 34 does not make adjustments to the state's testing schedule which plays a major role in districts' decisions about school calendars.

Variations and preferences in scheduling school calendars are currently based on local factors, such as climate and weather factors, facility features, as well as regional labor and industry needs. In addition, school calendars are most often based on direct input from parents, community members, and teachers.

Ohio law currently establishes the minimum number of required hours for the school year and continues to recommend a five-day week. Delaying the start of school until after Labor Day can have the effect of extending the school year into mid-to-late June or compressing time available for other calendar events and schedules. In addition, current Ohio law requires school boards to conduct a public hearing no later than 30 days prior to the adoption of the school calendar. This provides an opportunity for all to comment on their own schedule preferences and rationale.

Given current law and taking local factors into account, we believe this proposed bill is unnecessary and overly prescriptive. In addition, the threat of withholding state funds from traditional public schools, but not community schools STEM schools, college-preparatory boarding schools or chartered nonpublic schools is discriminatory and divisive.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We will be happy to address your questions.