**Don’t Cut Public School Funding in Southeast Ohio**
Jane Tumas-Serna, Private Citizen and Grandmother. Primary-Secondary Education Subcommittee on Wednesday, May 24th meeting at 2:30

If the purpose of the educational system is to train students to fulfill the needs of employers then these large employers, the job creators, should pay for it.

However, the original purpose of public education as described by Horace Mann the father of public education in America was to socialize and educate citizens in a democracy, to give all students the same experience, and to provide discipline and instill attitudes that help students prepare for future employment. The purpose of a public education was to educate students to be able to work together as citizens in a democracy. Therefore the public pays for public education because it is a public good. There was also a goal to provide the tools to citizen to be able to be active participants in the social, cultural and economic life of the community and help to bridge that gap between the haves and have nots. However, training students to fulfill the needs of employers should be paid for by the job creators, as part of the cost of using the human resources and natural resources of the community.

The purpose of a public education is to provide a bridge among economic and social inequalities. And obviously this has not happened -- we have the biggest disparity between the 1% and the other 99%. Economic and social inequity is rampant. So the public school system needs work. However, to solve this problem is not to create more layers, new entities and more division and to disrupt the entire system of education. By categorizing and dividing in to whom and where resources should go and who deserves funding because they have larger populations and more affluent families is not equitable or democratic.

We don’t have the numbers of school age children or the resources to attract affluent populations for “for-profit schools”. But cutting funding because we do not have the numbers or the affluence is unfair to our communities and our children. Poorly funded public schools affect everyone, because they are the life blood of our community:

 1. Public Schools educate the future leaders of our community. Without good public schools it is difficult to attract businesses to the area.

 2. Weak public schools invite those that can afford to, to attend private schools which most in Southeast Ohio cannot afford or for-profit schools that need to make profits. Both create imbalance in the community based on various factors be they economic disparity, social isolation or cultural difference.

 3. This imbalance is made worse by those who can move away, causing public schools to lose funding as the population of our community falls. This population lose further weakens our community.

 4. Without the population necessary to maintain the numbers, State and Federal agencies use this population lose to make cuts in resources to our public schools while private and “for profit” school do not find this community a good place to make a profit.

This fragmentation into public/private/for-profit makes worse the divisions that already exist in the community and everybody in the community loses. By funding for-profit schools with public school money it weakens our communities. If the reason for this is to help provide training for jobs which we desperately need in Marietta Ohio, we have an excellent technical school in our public system. Instead of giving public money to for-profit schools, use that money to fund our public schools and support our communities.

I have an example: the Marietta City public school system has a program Building Bridges to Careers but the projected deficit spending forecast by the Board of Education based on the cuts made in this budget will grow over the years and programs like Building Bridges to Careers will likely have to go.

Well that’s all I have. Thank you.