

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB225. My name is Brittany Alexander and I am an educator of 21 years. I am not an expert on broadband or internet connectivity, but my experience as an educator helps me to know how vital it is for the state to help expand broadband access to all Ohioans.

In my school district, like many others across the state, we utilize the “blended learning” method where our work is completed with both devices and paper and pencils. We use an online management system for much of this work. Students rely on internet access to complete learning tasks, to submit assignments, to do research, to collaborate with peers, and to check their grades. Much of the reporting educators do for grades, classroom updates, or even communicating with parents and guardians is digital. It is part of our daily lives at school. Of course we know that state tests are now administered online as well.

Beyond the disparity districts face from an unconstitutional funding model, the digital divide among them further exacerbates the inequity in our schools. In the information age, it is imperative that we give all Ohioans the opportunity to complete simple school tasks. The issue of broadband access clearly extends beyond our schools, affecting hospitals and businesses as well. I urge the committee to support this important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to give testimony today.