

Chair Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chris Williams and I am an elementary school intervention specialist in Columbus City Schools. I teach a class of up to 8 students each year, and we spend an outrageous amount of time on standardized testing. House Bill 239 is essential for students, families and educators. As a teacher, I have directly experienced how over-testing is stressful for students, takes up valuable instructional time, and contradicts the methods in place for our students to most effectively learn.

The students in my class have diverse challenges they have to overcome each day. Many of them are fully dependent on adults to get in their wheelchairs, get on the bus, and make it to school. Their physical limitations are profound, but they have resolve and determination to overcome them. Many of the tests they take involve small computers or unfamiliar devices of some kind. We spend all year working on specific hands-on approaches and methods for them to most effectively learn, but this is not how they are tested. They are expected to use unfamiliar devices and take one-size-fits-all tests. This is not fair or just. House Bill 239 would alleviate some of these unnecessary, overwhelming tests they are put through each year. It would allow more time for valuable instruction time they desperately need.

As my students grow and move up grade levels, they encounter even more testing. They become more stressful as the years go on, more time-consuming, and more distracting to their daily rhythms. We work exceptionally hard on establishing daily schedules that are predictable and help them thrive while in school. The amount of standardized testing they are subjected to each year disrupts the routines established that help them thrive. This is why House Bill 239 would greatly benefit my students, colleagues, and our community.

Less testing means more learning, more time for students to enjoy school and grow into who they are becoming. Testing stifles that growth, especially at the rate it is happening. House Bill 239 will help reclaim that time, time that is essential for students. Thank you for the opportunity to share.