**The Ohio Coalition for**

**Equity & Adequacy**

**Of School Funding**

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Honorable members of the Senate Education Committee:

On behalf of the Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding, I submit written opposition to Substitute HB 154. HB 70 of the 131st General Assembly was crafted in secret and was enacted in a 24-hour period with no opportunity for Ohioans to weigh in on the legislation. HB 70 has created chaos in Youngstown and Lorain and not improved the report card standing in either district.

The complex nature of Substitute HB 154, although well intended, will bureaucratize the governance of school districts just as HB 70 does. The problem of low performance in poverty-stricken school districts is not governance. It is lack of resources essential to meet the social and educational needs of children living in poverty.

It is ironic that the state has failed to establish a thorough and efficient system of common schools as mandated by the Ohio Constitution and as ordered by the Ohio Supreme Court in four decisions; and yet the state has the audacity to replace locally-constituted school district authority.

State officials should be devoting attention to their responsibility to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools and leave governance to the locally-elected members of boards of education.

The Senate Education Committee should pass the House version of HB 154 and then work toward the establishment of an adequate and equitable school funding system. Local school communities, through locally-elected boards of education, are in the best position to deliver educational programs and services. The state has the responsibility to provide the necessary fiscal resources.

William L. Phillis, Executive Director of The Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy of School Funding