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Committees:
Primary & Secondary
Education, Ranking
Economic & Workforce
Development
Ways & Means

Phillip M. Robinson Jr.
State Representative
Ohio House District 6

House Bill 49 Sponsor Testimony
House Primary & Secondary Education Committee
February 9, 2021

Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chairman Bird, and members of the Ohio House Primary & Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill (HB) 49, to reinstate the Joint Education Oversight Committee, commonly known as JEOC. My joint sponsor, Representative Lisa Sobecki, and I look forward to productive conversations with the committee and all related stakeholders.

During the recent 133rd General Assembly, the Ohio House came together in bipartisanship and made a lot of progress on multiple education issues. We put forward a unified plan to fix the EdChoice voucher program, laid the ground work to address the problems with the state report card system, and passed legislation to provide COVID-19 relief for students and schools, end Academic Distress Commissions (ADC) to build local means to reform struggling schools, and most importantly, create a fair school funding formula Ohio has needed for decades since the Ohio Supreme court ruled our current funding system unconstitutional. However, roadblocks have risen up for many of these issues that I believe JEOC could help resolve and even improve these policy solutions.

Many of the policy issues and legislation I just highlighted passed in the House, but did not pass out of the Senate. Even with the House's bipartisan agreement, we still need bicameral agreement to make law.

JEOC was a bipartisan, bicameral body overseeing emerging education policy issues in Ohio. The committee comprised of members of both the majority and minority caucuses, and consisted of 5 senators and 5 representatives. The nature of JEOC helps create both bipartisan and bicameral ideas and solutions to crafting legislation through public hearings and dialogue.

- Party divisions and the already separated parallel work of the House and Senate can create silos that slow down the legislative process. JEOC can help bring both chambers and caucuses together from the start to work on education issues together in both hearings with experts and continued conversations outside of the committee.
- Imagine if JEOC had continued last General Assembly, the two chambers could have better resolved their differences on ADCs, EdChoice vouchers, and school funding together instead of reaching dead-ends.

6th House District: Southeast Cuyahoga County

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- As much as we would like to think all sides could come together without a vehicle such as JEOC, we all know it does not always work out that way. Let's rebuild bicameral and bipartisan conversations.

The other important aspect of JEOC beyond its bicameral structure, was its ability to provide cutting edge education policy research and options for the legislature. The committee staff provided non-partisan and detailed analysis of the K-12 education system at a great value to taxpayers.

The JEOC staff's past expertise and knowledge has already impacted Ohio's education policy and the bills we create for the better in a number of ways. Some examples include:

- JEOC's work in their assessment report positively impacted SB 216 and the status of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the bill.
- Their research in the AI Scoring Engines Review brought to light the need for human scoring with students that normally receive high scores in writing but received 0 scores by the AI engines.
- Their research on the 2016 graduation requirements showed how the system had a negative impact on urban school districts across the state.
- Their work on the state report cards was essential for former Rep. Duffy's HB 591 as he attempted to develop improvements to the methods of assessing and measuring student performance, and that work continues today in legislative efforts.
- JEOC worked with the Cupp-Patterson team and made various research contributions to the effort of fair school funding reform.
- With different legislators reaching out to JEOC on different education policies, the list could be extensive. In 2018, there were 20 research requests made to JEOC from legislators.
- Before JEOC was ended, last General Assembly it made research and policy recommendation contributions to graduation requirements, ADC reform, state report cards, and more.

In conclusion, JEOC is an essential tool for providing the best information to create education policy. JEOC improves and streamlines bipartisan and bicameral policymaking, and provides specialized research and policy solutions for our children's education. Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chairman Bird, and members of the committee, once again we thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify before you today. We ask for your support of HB 49 and are happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

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