

June 15, 2021

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to consider my written testimony in opposition to House Bill 151.

My name is Linda Palombo-King, and I have had the privilege of being an educator for the past 27 years. Of these, 24 have been for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). During this time, I've had the honor of working with exceptional educators, support staff, and principals. Along with this, I have worked in multiple grade levels, subject areas, and with diverse scholars of all ages, academic levels and races. I've also worked with Cleveland State University and Baldwin Wallace College students as a Mentor Teacher while they were completing their Student Teaching and Practicum experiences. Currently, I serve as a Mentor Teacher for teachers new to the profession. My role is to provide frequent and ongoing support in hopes that the novice teachers will become successful members of the CMSD community.

I believe strongly that the Resident Educator Program has a positive impact on new teachers just starting in the profession. The program allows for new teachers to receive quality and much needed mentoring from experienced teachers, and it is outlined in a way that covers all the necessary components of being a successful teacher. Some of these areas include lesson planning, assessments, differentiation, rigor, resources, collaboration, communication, and professionalism. With this, the teachers can examine each area as it pertains to their own classroom and teaching philosophy. The program allows for the teachers and mentors to explore and reflect on their practice and work closely at making improvements.

The process of completing the RESA is structured in a way that allows for honest reflection as the novice teacher examines their own teaching. The teacher can question choices, techniques, practices, etc., and think about what they could do to improve, change or simply tweak. This is critical in not only improving their practice, but also honing in on areas that need refinement. Completing the RESA early in their careers leads to high-quality teaching, impacting their future years in the profession.

As a mentor teacher, I truly believe that guidance, support and honest feedback is the best way for new teachers to strengthen their craft. The Resident Educator Program allows for this process to happen, starting with year one. By the middle of year two, the teacher should have a toolbox of strategies and knowledge of best practices. The RESA assessment is a great way to determine if the teacher has reached this point. I have seen considerable value in this, as it ensures that every student in Ohio has an effective teacher.

I realize that many may say that new teachers have too much on their plates already and that the state evaluation system is an adequate way to assess teacher competence. However, I feel the RESA is much more of a learning process used for thoughtful self-reflection. The RESA pushes them to raise the bar high and create an environment where all students are engaged in the

learning process. With mentor support, I have seen our teachers adequately handle and successfully complete the RESA assessment in a positive manner as well as show substantial growth in the teaching profession. Throughout the years, I can honestly say that the RESA process has been an essential component to producing highly qualified teachers, and I think it would only serve as a disservice if the RESA were eliminated.

It takes years to build a strong mentoring program, and this bill would needlessly eliminate the Resident Educator Program and require each district to create a new program at a time when districts already face significant challenges in preparing for next year and are still recovering from the constant changes over the past couple years. This bill would also do away with the RESA, a measure that allows teachers to really look closely at best practices in education as well as reflect on their own teaching practice. This program helps ensure that every Ohio student has an effective, quality teacher, which is essential for our students to show academic growth. House Bill 151 would negatively impact the teaching profession in Ohio, so I strongly urge you to oppose it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda Palombo-King