

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Good afternoon, our names are Stephen and Kristina Ma. We are high school students who grew up attending Worthington Schools.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our **objection** to Senate Bill 178 because it would strip away the right for Ohio **students to have a voice** in education because students are the most important component of education. Students will be the stakeholders most impacted by this potential policy change. We are just a couple of the 1.8 million students who would hurt by this policy.

We agree with proponents of Senate Bill 178 that Ohio needs to do a better job increasing student success and improvements need to be made to our educational system. In fact, we are trying to help. We are the 2 students who are the catalyst for Representatives Sobecki's and Hick-Hudson's **House Bill 565** which had its 1st hearing last month. We proposed adding non-voting students onto the State Board of Education because students are the ones who know what's happening in the schools and should help influence policy.

We know Ohio students and voters overwhelming support student representation based on our statewide survey results and we also know several members from this committee support this idea. After we emailed all of your offices, several of your LA's contacted us to schedule meetings. This idea has **bi-partisan support** given 2 representatives from different political parties were persuaded to incorporate the idea of a Student Representative into a bill. House Bill 565 is **backed by both** Republican and Democrat Cosponsors.

Fundamental to the core of adding students onto the State Board of Education is increasing diversity of relevant perspectives. That diversity will be lost if the responsibilities voters entrusted to State Board of Education members were to be **delegated to 1 appointed director**

under Senate Bill 178. Research has shown that more diverse organizations make better decisions with better results.

Though it may be challenging for current State Board members to move on policy, **important issues affecting Ohio's future** like curriculum, learning standards, and state testing should not rest in the hands of people who weren't elected by voters and may not solicit public input.

Furthermore, resolutions and decisions made by the State Board of Education may be expedited faster once House Bill 298 sponsored by Vice Chair Bird and Representative Joe Miller becomes law. If Senate Bill 178 were to become law, it **may kill House Bill 298** which is sponsored by 60% of the committee members here and almost 45% of all members of the Ohio House of Representatives.

We are aware one of the drivers for this bill is to increase the presence of Career and Technical Education. While we agree students like us should discover our passions and need to acquire skills to become productive members of society, we don't understand why the promotion of Career Tech can't be achieved by modifying the existing framework within the Ohio Department of Education.

Another item worth mentioning is Senate Bill 178 counters the responsibilities traditionally associated with State Boards. Only 1 state has lesser duties relegated to its entirely appointed by its governor State Board members and 2 states failed to create a State Board of Education. Why does Ohio want to lead this change? Wouldn't it be more productive for Ohio to lead the charge to improve students' ability to solve problems, collaborate, and communicate?

Thank you for giving us your time and consideration. We hope you agree to oppose Senate Bill 178 for the sake of Ohio's students.