

To: Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee Chairman and members

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 178 and oppose this politically-motivated state takeover of public education.

Senator Bill Reineke's proposal to shift oversight of the Department of Education away from the State Board of Education to a "cabinet-level agency" directed by the governor's office is a blatant attempt to infuse partisan politics into public education.

Not only does this bill strip the State Board of Education of its essential roles and authority, it also puts the full authority of public education into the hands of appointed officials, completely silencing the voices of Ohio voters and taxpayers.

Aside from the content, I am very concerned about the timing of the bill and attempts to fast-track through the legislature during lame duck. This anti-democratic move prevents Ohioans from thoughtfully researching and deliberating on the bill with a broad range of education stakeholders and experts. Not to mention this bill was pushed through the Statehouse immediately after voters elected three new members to the State Board of Education.

This is anti-democratic because it is being pushed by the Republican Supermajority in The General Assembly, many who occupy seats from severely gerrymandered districts. Any time power is taken out of the hands of the people, and given to the few, it is undemocratic.

There is no place for partisan politics in public education or centralizing control of education in the governor's office.. We know that Ohio students are best served when families work with trained educators and caring board members to determine the face of education in the classroom.

It's time elected leaders stop prioritizing their own political agendas and put Ohio kids at the front of the class! I urge you to vote no on SB 178 and reject any attempts to attach its language as an amendment to another bill.

Thank you,

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