

December 13, 2022

Honorable Chairwoman Manning, Vice-chair Bird, Ranking member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

I am writing you to express my opposition to Senate Bill 178. That said, even though I'm not in favor of this bill, there are parts of it that I do agree with. For example, I completely agree with Senator Reineke's emphasis on career tech education and I agree with creating a Division specifically tasked with handling this. The skilled trades provide wonderful career paths for many kids for whom college might not be a good fit (or simply too expensive).

Since the goal of primary and secondary education is to prepare kids for adult life, I also agree with making education more connected to the skills you need to succeed in the workforce by restructuring/renaming the Department of Education (DOE) into the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). However, the main reason I'm opposed to the bill is this: I'm concerned about removing the powers from an elected body (BOE) and moving it to essentially **three individuals** who are **appointed** by the Governor – as would be the case with the DEW – rather than elected by the people. How do we know that these appointees are qualified education experts?

And will citizens be able to testify to these Directors to voice their concerns just as they can now with the BOE? That said, I believe it's smart to have these Directors come from the Governor's Executive Workforce Board. Again, this strengthens the connection between the workforce and education.

And when Senator Reineke mentions that the DOW will be "led by a Director appointed by the Governor with the advice **and consent of the Senate**," what does the "consent of the Senate" mean? Would the Senate, as is the case with the U.S. Secretary of Education, vote on who the Governor nominates for the Director position? Would the Senate recommend directors? If no to both, this bill would increase the power of the executive branch of government, which means that the Governor would have a worrying amount of power over education policy in Ohio. This seems undemocratic to me.

At the same time, I write this testimony knowing that it's completely futile. Looking at how fast this bill **suddenly** moved through the Senate and House at lightning speed, it's clear to me that the Ohio legislature is set on passing this bill no matter what the opposition says. It's extremely concerning to me that Ohio's elected officials are ramming a bill that is so important through the committees during a lame-duck session.

I question what the point is of having these writing this testimony, having these committee hearings, and putting up this charade of democracy when it's clear that this bill will pass no matter what happens. Unfortunately, I've accepted the fact that this testimony will make no difference or impact whatsoever on the status of this bill.

Thank you for your time in considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Edward Patrick Akinyemi