

**Testimony on HB110 (Appropriations for FY 2022-23 Budget)**  
**Submitted to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee,**  
May 17, 2021

by Ari Klein, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am writing to urge you to pass, implement and fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan in HB110.

My two children graduated from the Cleveland Heights – University Heights School District, where my wife, my parents, and I all went to school. I am retiring next month from my entire 33 year teaching career in this same school system.

The Senate Finance Committee has an opportunity to provide relief to Ohioans through passing the Fair School Funding Plan as written in HB110 as part of the Ohio budget. Districts like mine will not have to be at odds with members of their communities through the constant levy cycle if this funding passes. Passing the responsibility to Ohio's citizens to properly fund their community's public schools has to end – you have a constitutional responsibility to fund a public system of common schools. This is the **ONLY** constitutional responsibility for funding that you are required to provide. Vouchers and Charters create **TWO** or more systems of common schools – that is not your charge.

I find it contradictory that some decry lack of money for the Fair School Funding Plan while in the same breath espouse funding universal vouchers. Families who choose to send their children to private, parochial, and charter schools have a right to do so, but the state does not have a constitutional obligation to fund their education. To do so when you are not properly funding public education would be like skimping on a meal and just eating dessert – this is not something any of us with children would allow, so it should not be acceptable to funding the heart of community life in our state.

The good news is that the Fair School Funding Plan would help rectify a number of these issues. It is well thought out and researched over several years, vetted by practitioners, and would allow you, as legislators, to fulfill your one true fiscal responsibility as laid out in the Ohio Constitution – funding a system of common schools. This plan has overwhelming support from the Ohio House, whose members represent the same people as you. My work as a teacher may be coming to an end, but I believe it is my responsibility to continue advocating for communities across the state by ensuring proper funding of schools. Healthy schools equate to a stronger Ohio. You have this chance to make sure that Ohio's priorities are clear for the huge majority of families who use public schools in our state. You can fix this broken system. As MLK Jr. said, "The time is always right to do what is right."