



Chair Brenner Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you Senators for allowing me to speak before you today regarding this very important issue. My name is Holly Kimpon, and I am a teacher at Genoa Area Schools, which is located in a small rural working-class community outside of Toledo. I came here today to urge you to support the Fair Funding Plan in House Bill 110 to save struggling districts like ours across the state.

I am not a financial expert when it comes to the minutiae of school funding, but I took some time to look over our district's audits and five year forecasts and it was easy for me to recognize just how inequitable our State funding is.

Genoa Schools received more State funding in 2005 than we do today, yet our expenses continue to rise exponentially much in part due to State mandated items. I've found that almost *half* of our total revenue comes from property taxes. Since we do not have a large business in our community to help support our schools, those property taxes come solely from our farmers and our homeowners who are themselves struggling to get by. Due to the diligence of our Board and Administration, and the help of our community, we've been able to keep up with this unbalanced funding for over a decade by being fiscally responsible .

We share services with other districts to split costs, we've kept our staff numbers and salaries at or below average of other area districts, we are in the lowest 20% of cost per pupil spending in the State, we rely on our booster's and PTO organizations to help with large purchases, and we write grants to fund upgrades in facilities and bring in new equipment. These strategies have helped keep us afloat, but now we've come to a point where there is little else to cut that wouldn't substantially affect our students.

I'm here today because our kids deserve more, not less. Our students become doctors, nurses, teachers, armed servicemen, mechanics, and pipefitters - just like any student in any other district in Ohio. We have students that need support academically, gifted students that need challenges, struggling students that need guidance counselors, kids who need access to a nurse daily. Our district is struggling to provide these because our funding has remained stagnant for decades, even though our needs continue to grow.

Investing in our students should not be left up to the whim of our local voters. We are not a wealthy community - many are on fixed incomes, or are struggling to keep their own heads above water. Yet, they've stepped up to the plate time and time again to pass a levy and fund our schools when the state has fallen short. Unfortunately, they've come to a point now where there is no more left to give, they are saying: "No. No more levies." The services and opportunities that our students need and deserve are very much in jeopardy, and I fear for the future of our district, and other rural districts like ours that don't have a large corporation to support them. The burden of school funding should no longer be placed on our community members. We need *you* to come through for us now and support this Bill to fund all Ohio schools fairly.

Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to speak to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me today.

Holly Kimpon

*Empowering our Students to be Future Ready*