



**Senate Finance Committee
HB 170 Proponent Testimony
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
Ohio School Boards Association
May 26, 2021**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 170. Our organizations represent public school district boards of education, superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, business managers, and other school business officials from around the state.

On behalf of our members, we write to express our strong support of HB 170, which would disburse federal pandemic aid to our school districts, educational service centers, joint vocational school districts, and other entities. These federal funds have been awarded and allocated by the federal government and we urge you to pass HB 170 so that these dollars can be accessed by our schools to support the continuity of educational services for students.

HB 170 provides the additional appropriation authority to allow schools and districts to access the federal funds already allocated them. It does not represent or create new federal allocations. Like other federal grants, schools and districts do not receive the allocated federal funds directly; they receive the funds after submitting claims for reimbursement through the Ohio Department of Education. Therefore, it is *critical* that the state establish this appropriation authority provided for under HB 170 to ensure that ODE can provide funds to schools and districts as they submit claims for reimbursement.

Further, there is concern that the delay in appropriation will result in negative cash balances for these federal funds, which could result in an audit finding. For this reason, we request that the bill be amended to provide temporary authority to allow schools and districts to carry negative fund balances for these federal funds as a result of delays in reimbursement payments.

For the reasons stated above, we urge the committee to swiftly pass HB 170. Please contact us if you have questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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