



**Testimony of Ken S. Swink
Director of Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council**

**Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
March 22, 2022**

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB260. My name is Ken Swink, and I am the Executive Director of the Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council, a Regional Council of Governments under Ohio Revised Code 167.081 representing 263 school districts and public entities. I am also the Chairperson of the Ohio Council of Educational Purchasing Consortia, representing the six Regional Council of Governments that legally bids and procures construction services in the state of Ohio.

The Ohio Council of Educational Purchasing Consortia (OCEPC) collects administrative fees from vendors in the same way that out of state purchasing cooperatives do. But Ohio schools benefit from all administrative fees collected by OCEPC in the form of cash rebates or services and/or programs provided to schools at a reduced cost or at no direct cost to the school. These funds allow Ohio schools to keep general fund dollars in the classroom to help students.

As the fiscal agent for the OCEPC, we are audited annually by the Ohio Auditor of State and for the fifth year in a row, we have received the Ohio Auditor of State Award for an excellent audit. All administrative fees have been audited and accounted for in support of the Ohio Public School Districts who came together many years ago to form the six Regional Council of Governments that comprise the OCEPC.

My individual Council, the Southwestern Ohio EPC alone has given back over 8 million dollars directly to our member schools over the last 9 years. Dayton Public Schools has received \$455,000, Kettering City Schools \$322,000, Northmont City Schools \$295,000 and Springfield City Schools \$275,000. This would not be possible without the administrative fees that currently stay right here in Ohio. If SB260 is approved, these administrative fees will be taken away from Ohio Public Schools and sent to coops in Minnesota, Tennessee and Texas where they will go unaudited by the Ohio Auditor of State.

I respectfully request that you reject SB260 and keep Ohio tax dollars in Ohio supporting Ohio Public Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am happy to answer any questions.