

79TH HOUSE DISTRICT

PARTS OF CLARK COUNTY

INCLUDING: SPRINGFIELD, NEW CARLISLE,
SOUTH CHARLESTON, AND ENON

COMMITTEES

CHAIR: AGRICULTURE & CONSERVATION
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



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**State Representative Kyle Koehler
Ohio House of Representatives**

Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee – thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for Substitute House Bill 67.

Sub House Bill 67 is an important bill that I am asking my colleagues to support in order to bring relief to school students across Ohio due to COVID-19 and the state's response to it that has affected K-12 education in our state.

This bill was introduced after I received calls and emails from superintendents, teachers and parents in my district. Probably not much different than the same calls and emails you have received from those in your districts.

The sentiment has always been the same: When our students come back to school full time on March 1st – ALLOW the teachers *to teach* instead of immediately gearing up for mandated tests.

This bill started as a simple bill to seek a waiver for all federally mandated tests for the 20-21 school year. Thanks to Chair Manning - we had a vote scheduled for the bill late last month to do just that.

On that Tuesday morning, we were all notified that the U.S. Department of Education had sent out a letter letting us know that THEY would NOT be issuing *any* waivers for mandated testing for *any* schools in the United States.

Since that time and because of that letter, we have worked with the Ohio Department of Education, groups like the Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Association of School Boards, and many other groups to substitute the bill with provisions that we believe will help relieve pressure for the last 60 days of the 20-21 school year.

As I have stated, the bill needs to go immediately into effect for it to have any impact for this current school year.

During testimony in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee and in conversation with my Democrat colleagues - we heard that this bill does not deal with the mental and emotional issues that students are dealing with today.

We were told that it does not fix the State Report Card issue in Ohio.

I will gladly admit that to be true.

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This bill, nor House Bill 40, introduced by those same colleagues, has attempted to address these and other bigger issues. Nor do I believe a bill drafted quickly over the last week... **and especially** one that **MUST** contain an emergency clause should ever attempt to tackle those bigger issues.

Substitute House Bill 67 has one single purpose: To provide relief to students who are returning to school so that *these tests* have as little impact on them as possible for THIS school year and THIS school year only.

My Joint-Sponsor Representative Bird will detail how the bill deals with the required tests for schools across Ohio.

I would like to address how the bill deals with the results of those tests...

First, the bill allows students to use “end of course grades” instead of mandated tests for the “graduation point system” and “grade equivalency system” as we did in House Bill 164 from the 133rd General Assembly. This is needed mostly for students who will be graduating in 2022, 2023 and 2024. But, again, it **ONLY** applies to tests taken this year.... **NOT** in the following years.

Second, it adds in the same flexibility for graduation THIS school year that we gave students last school year in House Bill 197 and House Bill 164.

There is also a provision added to allow Home Educated students to forgo end of year assessments just like we are doing for their public-school counterparts.

We are indeed applying for a waiver for “accountability requirements” as laid out by the U.S. Department of Education letter that we received late last month.

Finally, it extends the date for reporting of data for the state report card from September 15th to October 14th.

BUT... I want to remind everyone that in my House Bill 409 from the last GA regarding state report cards we said:

- The Ohio Department of Education is prohibited from publishing and issuing ratings for overall grades, components, and individual measures on the state report cards for *any* school districts or schools for the 2020-2021 school year. It also prohibits ODE from publishing *any* rankings of school buildings otherwise required under continuing law for the 2020-2021 school year. It also relieves ODE from the *requirement* to submit preliminary data for report cards for school districts and buildings.

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Mr. Chairman, even those who testified in support of taking all the tests agreed that not holding schools or students accountable for mandated testing was **and is** the right thing to do.

Despite earning a 93-1 vote of support in the Ohio House, the emergency clause was removed from this bill. Mr. Chairman and committee members, re-adding the emergency clause is not optional – it is necessary to allow the provisions of this bill to impact students THIS school year.

As I have told others - Substitute House Bill 67 is NOT the bill we set out to pass. But it is the bill we NEED to pass to provide relief to students we thought would be back full time in August of 2020... not March 2021.

A bill that provides relief to teachers who care deeply for their students. A bill that sets up schools to return to full time attendance in the Fall of 2021 with as few scars as possible from the state's response to the Corona Virus.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on Substitute House Bill 67. I am happy to answer any questions.