



## HOUSE ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – Proponent Testimony, Senate Bill 1, 3.28.23

Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Ohio Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity (AFP). As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the country, AFP is driving long-term solutions to some of the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its thousands of activists across Ohio are dedicated to breaking barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and by transforming their communities. Accordingly, I would urge this committee to support and pass Senate Bill 1, sponsored by Senator Bill Reineke.

Sen. Reineke explained the bill in detail last week during sponsor testimony, and this legislation has received considerable public attention, so committee members are likely aware of its contents, but just as a brief review, here are some of its key components:

- SB 1 streamlines the State Board's duties and refocuses its attention to core administrative functions, like teacher licensure.
- SB 1 remodels ODE into the Department of Education & Workforce (DEW), a cabinet-level agency comprised of two divisions – the Division of Primary & Secondary Education, and the Division of Career Technical Education; the Director of the Department and the Deputies overseeing each Division would all be Senate-confirmable positions appointed by the Governor, who would thereby be directly accountable to the both the executive and legislative branches, which are accountable to the people of this state.
- SB 1 charges DEW with resolving other ongoing issues, such as student transportation issues, and the administration of ACE accounts, to name a few.
- SB 1 places emphasis on the fact that the primary purpose of public education is to prepare the students of today to be citizens capable of sustaining the workforce of tomorrow.

Most of AFP's involvement in education issues typically tends to take the form of advocacy for more robust school choice options for Ohio parents and students. My organization closely

monitored SB 178 during the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and is proud to support SB 1 this session. From AFP's perspective, the barrier being broken via SB 1 is the dysfunction within the current bureaucracy itself. Others from my organization have testified before the House already this month in support of concepts like the expansion of EdChoice eligibility proposed in Governor DeWine's budget, and of HB 11, the Backpack Bill. Through conversations with key stakeholders, and through our own analysis, AFP felt it important to weigh in on SB 1 for one primary reason: Ohio's state government needs an overhaul if it is to function properly to achieve the best possible outcomes for families and kids, especially if innovative, needed new approaches to education delivery may be on the horizon in the near future.

AFP believes that the purpose of our education systems needs to shift from schooling to learning, from a one-size-fits-all system rooted in standardization and uniform outcomes to normalizing a multitude of learning approaches and outcomes. That purpose will lead to more empowerment for all children to discover how their unique talents and interests can create value in society, allowing them to live lives filled with meaning and purpose. SB 1 will help lay the foundation for such a reimagined system by making those who set and administer education policy in Ohio more directly accountable to the elected representatives of the people.

No piece of legislation can ever solve all problems for all people. But SB 1, should it be enacted, will make state government more well-situated to solve problems more efficiently, while also hopefully generating more forward-thinking approaches attuned to current trends and best practices to meet Ohioans' needs for generations to come.

Thank you again, Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today and I will do my best to answer any questions that you or members of the committee may have.

*Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit [www.AmericansForProsperity.org](http://www.AmericansForProsperity.org).*