

Written Testimony of Jan Nesor, PhD
HB 206 Policy for the indefinite expulsion of a student that a superintendent determines is dangerous to students and staff

State of Ohio
Committee
October 16, 2023

Chair Bird, Ranking Member Arthur, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

My name is Jan Nesor, and I am a professor of Education Policy at the Ohio State University. I do not represent Ohio State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to HB 206.

The bill allows school superintendents to suspend students from school for up to 180 school days – de facto expulsion - “for actions the superintendent determines pose imminent and severe endangerment to the health and safety of other pupils or school employees.” This could be done even if a student’s actions did not qualify for permanent exclusion under [ORC 3313.662](#). The bill is one of several introduced around the country that would allow public schools to abrogate their responsibility for educating all children by pushing out those whose actions administrators subjectively feel to be threatening. The vagueness of the phrase “imminent and severe endangerment” means that the legislation gives school administrators a huge amount of leeway to banish students for any number of reasons. We know from a mountain of research that a disproportionately large percentage of such expulsions are directed against Black kids and Latinx kids.

This bill is bad educational practice and bad policy. Instead, schools should be funded to develop restorative justice programs. These are by no means simple to implement, nor are they panaceas¹, but there is strong evidence that they reduce suspensions, improve behavior, and further educational aims. Expulsion, on the other hand, primes the school-to-prison pipeline.² I urge you to reject this unnecessary and perverse bill which, while no doubt intended to do good, will only exacerbate problems.

Sincerely,

Jan Nesor

¹ Gregory, A., & Evans, K.R. (2020). *The Starts and Stumbles of Restorative Justice in Education: Where Do We Go from Here?* Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/restorative-justice>.

² Burch, P. (Ed.). (2022). *System failure: Policy and practice in the school-to-prison pipeline*. Routledge.