

Written Testimony of Council President Melody Joy Hart

Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

February 20, 2023

Before the Senate Education Committee regarding SB1

I have long thought that public education should not be a political football. Public Education, an invention of Benjamin Franklin and a uniquely American institution, provides training to all our citizens that is needed to participate in our democracy.

Two of the great traditions of Public Education are local control and professional administration. To that end we elect members of the State Board of Education and they appoint a statewide Superintendent of Schools just as we in Cleveland Heights vote on our local Board of Education and it hires a professional executive.

That Executive/Superintendent reports to the elected School Board. The State system mirrors our local one with an elected Board representing a geographic area of the state giving us democratic input through several people, rather than establishing an 'education czar' beholden only to one person.

If we are trying to teach people to participate in the governmental process, eliminating our right to elect a School Board is about as American as borscht. Ben Franklin would not be proud.

Please vote down this ill advised attempt to politicize the schools.