



1251 E. Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43205

Senate Education Committee
Proponent testimony Senate Bill 66
Darold Johnson, Director of Legislation and Political Action
Ohio Federation of Teachers
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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 66. I am Darold Johnson, Director of Legislation and Political Action at the Ohio Federation of Teachers.

Senate Bill 66, HB 32 in the last GA, is a bill that clarifies and codifies a requirement for the timely transfer of a K-12 student's records when a student transfers schools. Under this legislation, that timeframe would be within five school days.

There are currently over 1.6 million students enrolled in public schools in Ohio, and over half of those students are classified as economically disadvantaged and are more likely to be highly mobile students. Many of these students are in situations far out of their control, such as experiencing homelessness, being recently placed in foster care, and even facing food insecurity.

The increased mobility means that many students will be changing school districts. It is vital that their records follow them promptly. Under current Ohio law, there is no timeframe for transferring primary or secondary school records, even when the request is made by a parent.

When a school doesn't transfer records promptly, students may spend weeks in an inappropriate classroom setting, which is especially detrimental to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP), the teacher and the class as a whole. It is critically important for the receiving school to know the student's academic background including what courses the student has completed, how the student performed in those courses, what academic challenges might need to be addressed, or any other information that will help the student stay on track. A student's school record will provide this information. Obtaining school records within five school days will allow the new school district to properly place students and continue their education in the most efficient way.

SB 66 will create a smooth transition allowing for the best academic outcome possible. Not having a student's record is frustrating for parents as well as educators, but ultimately, the student is the one who suffers the most and has to deal with the consequences.

In the last General Assembly, Senator Ingram had a similar bill, HB 32, that received bi-partisan support and passed out of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee. It failed to get a House floor vote despite being passed out of the House Primary and Secondary Committee. The primary reason it failed was because private schools wanted to withhold records to recoup outstanding fees. That is a solution that holds children's academic futures hostage for the sake of finances. That is not acceptable.

SB 66 is a commonsense, non-partisan bill that will treat public, private, and charter schools equally. It is worthy of bi-partisan support like the previous bill received in the last GA. I urge committee members to consider moving the bill so that no child will suffer from learning loss.

Again, thank you for your time, and I will happily answer any questions.