



Chairman Brennan, Vice-Chair O'Brien, Ranking member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee:

I'm Shawn Brown, Superintendent of the Auglaize County ESC and a member of WOAN, a group of 40 districts located in Northwest Ohio. Our districts look very different from other districts in the state, and we firmly support legislation that returns control of how we run our districts back to the locally elected school boards and the staff they hire.

SB 168 provides districts flexibility in the teacher evaluation process, allowing us the opportunity to insert criteria and characteristics, which we believe best serve our local student population. It cannot be said often enough that one size does not fit all and the repeated attempts by the state and the department to shoehorn every district into one model serves no one.

Along with flexibility in the teacher evaluation process, the bill provides flexibility in licensure requirements allowing us to hire individuals who have the expertise in a particular subject matter, even if they may not have a major in education. In some of our districts, this additional flexibility is incredibly important.

I would like to respectfully ask the committee to take this bill an additional step and insert a task force, whose responsibility would be to look at each mandate, both funded and unfunded, that the state has imposed on our districts and educational service centers. I think you would be surprised at the number of items you would be examining. I cannot think of one area of our school operations that isn't infringed upon by either the Ohio Revised Code or policies/procedures of the Department of Education and Workforce. You've created this new agency to be nimbler and responsive, and it seems that it would be a good time to re-evaluate every aspect of how the Department interacts with districts.

I often hear that private schools are a better value for the money than our public schools and I would respectfully disagree with that sentiment. They are not burdened with many of the requirements our local districts must meet. As we move towards more school choice, I believe it is only fair that our public schools be able to compete without having the anchor around our necks that many of these requirements create.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to testify. Again, I respectfully ask that you amend SB 168 to include the establishment of a task force or committee whose purpose is to evaluate every requirement, both funded and unfunded, imposed on our local districts, produce a report to the General Assembly that could then be used to formulate a plan to relieve our districts of those that are excessive or no longer necessary. I will attempt to answer any questions you may have.