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Primary and Secondary Education

Sarah Fowler Arthur State Representative

Testimony, HB 147-Regards teacher licensure revocation, hiring practices, conduct

Thank you Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 147.

HB 147 is an updated version of HB 403 from the last General Assembly where it passed the House 91-0 but unfortunately, ran out of time in the Senate. I would like to thank Representative Miller for asking me to join him in this effort to better protect Ohio students and teachers from bad actors.

Disciplinary due process is a critical component of educator licensing which protects both teachers and students in Ohio. Right now, when a teacher has been placed under investigation for alleged misconduct and they subsequently *resign*, the case continues through the due process of investigation, hearings, and a conclusion being admitted to their file before dismissing the complaint.

However, if the teacher *retires* under investigation misconduct, then their record is wiped clean and the due process steps do not continue. This oversight potentially allows someone who had been an alleged perpetrator of misconduct, even as serious as a criminal activity or serious harm to a student, to be rehired in a new district with a completely clean slate.

Representative Adam Miller and I believe this loophole should be promptly closed to ensure that due process is followed, students and teachers are protected, and district hopping to avoid consequences of bad behavior is no longer allowed.

At the request of the former Ohio Department of Education, we included an expanded list of individuals licensed by other state agencies who must register with ODE to work in a school. These individuals include social workers, nurses, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists.

With the registration, the State Board of Education and the new Department of Education and Workforce will have authority to use the same disciplinary process as is currently used for Ohio teachers, with due process, and may discipline, suspend or revoke the registration of an individual who engages in criminal activity or conduct unbecoming in a school setting.

House Bill 147 was passed out of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee and the House will bipartisan support.

I'd like to thank the committee for their consideration of House Bill 147 and welcome any questions.

Thank you.

Sarah Fowler Arthur