

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dr. Mary Crabtree. I am a veteran teacher and very concerned citizen, who wonders why public schools are no longer a priority of the legislature. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 295.

As a graduate of a public school, and public Universities, and a career teacher, I find SB295 along with many other decisions that have effected public education, to be puzzling at best, and harmful to the future of education in Ohio at worst. Public education is about local control, choices that local School Boards can make, knowing they know what is best for the students in their communities. This bill would take away that control, and cause harm to so many students. It also removes parent choice, which has been such a BIG deal for the legislatures for the past many years. I mean, I have long heard that the reason we have school vouchers is because parents deserve choice, BUT this bill takes that choice away from the parents, and puts in the hands of legislators, who do not know the community, do not understand their struggles, live there, work there, or participate in the many school activities that bring the communities together. We also know that those schools that struggle to make passing "grades" on state tests are often those that are also in areas where poverty is high, tax rates are low, and funding is not available for programs that might make a difference. This bill simply punishes those who have the least, removes their options, and forces already poor areas into education bankruptcy. I recognize that this is a continued to push to marginalize public schools and push to some sort of private for profit model of education, to the detriment of the students in Ohio. This is NOT what is best for kids, it is NOT what is best for education and it is NOT what is best for the local communities.

- DO NOT PASS major pieces of legislation without time for public consideration and input!
 - There is NO WAY all legislators, school board members, school district leaders, and engaged parents have had a chance to read and review this 100+ page document!
 - This is not the kind of thing you can simply rush through the legislature!
- This bill would remove local control from elected school board members and parents.
- This bill would remove parents' rights to choose their child's school.
- The state should not be making big, closed-door decisions without community involvement!

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this rushed and ridiculously poorly thought out bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.