

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Tammy Calhoun, and I am the proud parent of two public school graduates from Fremont, Ohio. I am here to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 295.

As a parent, I've seen firsthand how dedicated our schools are to providing quality education, even amidst challenges. Senate Bill 295 proposes changes that threaten the stability and progress of our public schools. By targeting so-called "underperforming" schools for closure, it overlooks the systemic challenges these schools face, such as funding inequities and socioeconomic barriers. Closing schools doesn't solve these problems—it exacerbates them by displacing students and creating more instability.

Moreover, 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. Decisions impacting the future of Ohio's children and schools deserve transparency and thoughtful deliberation.

In communities like Fremont, we work hard to build a supportive environment for students. Enacting policies that stigmatize or shutter schools without addressing root causes undermines those efforts. Research consistently shows that educational outcomes improve not through punitive measures but through investments in resources like smaller class sizes, mental health support, and teacher development.

I urge the committee to vote no on this harmful bill. Instead of penalizing struggling schools, we need policies that uplift them, ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you for considering my testimony and for your commitment to Ohio's children and families.

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