

Greetings esteemed members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony. My name is Tonya Conner. I am an Ohio resident from Cincinnati. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 206.

I am a passionate humanitarian, former Chief of Staff of a nonprofit organization, former administrator of a nonprofit whose mission was to build equitable systems via policy, a mother, an aunt of Cincinnati Public School students, a board member, and a community advocate.

I have seen, firsthand, the negative effects of school suspension. Furthermore, the way school suspension has been haphazardly presented to students as a blanket sentence by overloaded and careless administrators. This bill would allow these types of administrators to abuse the law and unjustly suspend students for up to 180 days (which is the entire school year) with unlimited extensions, not giving the student any chance to succeed.

High schools with high suspension rates tended to have high dropout rates (Education and Treatment of Children. Vol. 34, No. 2, 2011). It is well established that Black students are more likely to be suspended than White students (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008), and that school suspensions are consistently associated with negative academic outcomes for individual students (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 2000).

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to consider my written testimony.

Tonya Conner