



Senate Finance

Testimony on HB 33

Presented by Dr. Lisa Hinkelman, Founder and CEO of Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX)

May 18, 2023

Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, Vice Chairman Cirino and all members of the Senate Finance, thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding the FY 2024-2025 operating budget for Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX), the leading nonprofit organization focused on programming, research and education centered on girls.

My name is Dr. Lisa Hinkelman, I am a counselor, educator, researcher, speaker and author who has spent nearly twenty years working in schools, conducting research with girls and educating girls and adults first as a professor at The Ohio State University, and for the last 12 years, as the Founder and CEO of ROX.

The world is complicated for girls. Confidence. Stress. Pressure. Social Media. Body Image. When I started my work and research in this area, I never could have imagined that today we would be reporting that girls' confidence drops 26% between 5th and 9th grade and that it doesn't recover; that one in three girls say that they are afraid to be a leader because others will think that she is bossy and that half of girls report that they are afraid to speak their mind or disagree with others because they want to be liked.

Couple this with the findings from the February 2023 CDC report from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which revealed that nearly 60% of high school girls reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless, 30% have seriously considered suicide and 1 in 5 experienced sexual violence within the past year. **It is clear that all girls need connection, support, and skills and that is precisely what we are doing at ROX.**

At ROX we train and license school counselors, social workers, and educators to deliver a 20-week in depth, evidence-based curriculum to girls in grades 5-12. ROX sessions focus on team building, effective communication, girl drama and bullying, healthy relationships and support networks, social media, body image, sexual harassment, safety and violence prevention, stress and coping, academic and career development, and leadership. Meeting once a week for twenty weeks as a part of the school day, ROX equips girls with the skills they need to navigate the challenges that they face, and supports each girl in actualizing her full potential.

And the data tells us that ROX works. Pre- and post-tests with more than 30,000 participants since 2006, show that girls in ROX report higher levels of confidence, more supportive and less competitive relationships with other girls, and an increased connection to school. ROX girls are more adept at standing up for themselves and are more likely than their peers to believe that their voice and opinion matter. An independent data analysis of ROX outcomes showed that 84% of girls made new friends in ROX, 89% can respond to bullying more effectively, and more than 95% can identify strategies to keep them safe online *and* in potentially threatening situations. Perhaps most importantly at this particular moment, is that 94% of girls say that ROX is a place at school where they feel included.

Parents and school administrators concur with these findings. When surveyed, 96% of parents reported observing their daughter use the skills that she learned in ROX. Ninety-three percent said that having ROX helped their daughter manage bullying/drama more effectively and 98% said they would like their school to continue to provide the ROX program.

When school staff and administrators were surveyed about the impact of ROX, 70% reported a reduction in girl bullying/drama, 86% observed girls demonstrating more leadership skills and 85% saw an improvement in overall school climate.

ROX would respectfully ask to re-establish funding support in the budget for ROX through a GRF designation.

Amendment: SC1400

GRF ALI 200597, Program and Project Support

ROX \$125, 000 both FY' 2024, 2025 for a total of \$ 250,000

ROX originally received funding:

- \$125,000 in state fiscal year 2020 pursuant to language in Amended Substitute House Bill 166 of the 133rd General Assembly.
- \$125,000 in state fiscal year 2021 pursuant to language in Amended Substitute House Bill 166 of the 133rd General Assembly

Thank you again members of the House Finance your time today, I am happy to take any questions at this time.

ROX is a nonprofit organization that operates a school-based program centered on equipping girls with the information and skills that they need to live healthy, safe, productive and violence-free lives. ROX operates in **321 schools throughout Ohio** and currently impacts nearly **5,000 girls in the state, across 44 counties**.

ROX trains and licenses professional school counselors, social workers and educators to deliver a **20-week evidence-based program** in schools for girls that helps girls develop the skills to navigate the challenges they face during middle and high school. Starting in 5th grade, ROX programs are delivered in schools, during the school day, and are available to girls up through grade 12.

In ROX, girls learn how to **communicate** effectively, develop **healthy relationships**, support other girls, form a **healthy body image**, navigate **social media**, manage **stress** and pressure, **stay safe** and **defend themselves** and plan for **college** and their **career**.

JUST THE FACTS ...

60%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS REPORT PERSISTENT FEELINGS OF **SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS** (CDC, 2023).

1 in 4

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS REPORTED **MAKING A SUICIDE PLAN** WITHIN THE PAST YEAR (CDC, 2023).

6

NUMBER OF **HOURS** GIRLS REPORT SPENDING EACH DAY **USING SOCIAL MEDIA** (THE GIRLS' INDEX™, 2017)

1 in 5

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS REPORTED **BEING SEXUALLY ASSAULTED** WITHIN THE PAST YEAR (CDC, 2023).

46%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS **DON'T THINK THAT THEY ARE SMART ENOUGH** FOR THEIR DREAM JOB (THE GIRLS' INDEX™, 2017)

WHAT ROX DOES



PROGRAMMING FOR GIRLS

TRAIN FEMALE COUNSELORS, SOCIAL WORKERS & EDUCATORS TO DELIVER EVIDENCE-BASED EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING IN SCHOOLS



NATIONAL RESEARCH

STUDY THE COMPLEX ISSUES IMPACTING GIRLS BY SURVEYING 15,000+ GIRLS ACROSS THE U.S. & PUBLISHING THE GIRLS' INDEX™ REPORT



RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL STAFF & DATA-DRIVEN RESOURCES FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT

ROX FUNDING

It costs \$650 to train a new ROX facilitator via a 22-hour professional development experience. Once trained, facilitators run ROX programs in their schools and are supported by ROX with everything they need to implement their program including: pre- and post-data collection and reporting; materials, supplies and swag for ROX girls; parent resources including a book, newsletters and webinar access; on-demand coaching and professional development. The cost of this implementation is \$150/girl.

ROX does not charge individual girls or families for program fees, rather utilizes a combination of philanthropy and school support to implement ROX programs. Through this shared-cost model ROX raises \$50 of every \$150 participant fee in order to make the program as accessible for schools as possible.

Total Cost of ROX Program	% Funded by School Partners	Difference Funded by ROX, Inc. <i>(Funded by Grants & Philanthropy)</i>
\$150 per girl	\$100 per girl	-\$50 per girl
6,000 girls = \$900,000	6,000 girls = \$600,000	6,000 girls = \$300,000

Amount	FY24 + FY25 Opportunity
\$300,000	Supplement the program costs for 3,000 girls/year (6,000 total)
\$200,000	Fully supports the expansion of an additional 666 girls/year in ROX (1,333 total)

PREVIOUS SUPPORT FOR ROX

ROX received \$232,850 in the 2019-2020 biennial budget, resulting in direct impact for thousands of girls across Ohio at a time where they needed it most. In 2019-2020 ROX served 6,860 Ohio girls despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to our schools and communities.

Students did not experience a gap in services from ROX, instead, the support dollars allowed ROX to pivot quickly to engage instructional designers to transform our in-person program delivery model to an online delivery model. The Virtual ROX and e-learning content has been used in remote, hybrid and in-person learning environments with more than 2,800 ROX girls.

In addition, ROX responded to the pandemic by increasing our program evaluation and impact reporting; delivering parent webinars and providing materials and resources for parents of program participants; providing professional development and materials for school staff; developing an online resource and support portal for program facilitators.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN ROX

94%	9 in 10	85%	95%
of girls say ROX is a place at school where they feel included	girls feel safer and more confident that they can protect themselves	of school administrators reported an overall improvement in school climate after ROX	have strategies to keep them safe online and in potentially threatening situations.

