

Senate Finance Committee – Testimony

For the May 31, 2023 Hearing on Sub. HB 33

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the chance to submit testimony on the appropriations bill. My particular interest lies in education funding.

My name is Ari Klein. I am a retired public school mathematics teacher and lifelong Ohioan. I am not as directly impacted by your decisions on funding public education but continue to be interested in doing what I can to ensure that young people have the best opportunity to have high quality education in their public schools.

The Fair School Funding Plan was rigorously vetted and was fully adopted by the House as part of HB 33. I urge you to **keep this plan intact** and fully fund it. Fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan will help the vast majority of Ohio families as around 90% of Ohio school children attend public schools. If implemented and funded completely it would help solve one of the greatest errors of the last many years where education funding has been the stepchild of monied interests in diverting funds from our public schools to private and religious schools.

Most importantly, it is essential to the fairness part of the Fair School Funding Plan for you to **use the 2022 cost data** to establish the funding levels that school districts will be guaranteed. Currently, the flawed data used for the first two years of the Fair School Funding Plan have left great inequities among public school districts. I understand that when looking at budgets it is easy to focus on a macro picture of cost to the state, but if you dig just a little under the surface it will become obvious that overall cost to the state does not address the distribution to individual school districts. Using current data will help alleviate some of these problems and ensure better service at the micro level – which is, of course, the students themselves.

Lastly, **adopt the Fair School Funding formula as passed by the House**, funding at least the third and fourth years of the plan. More and more people have short attention spans these days – so much that it is difficult to stick to something for long. The funding formula passed by the House is a long-term investment. Obviously, I would have wanted all six years of the plan to be passed in the original bill, but I understand why only the first two years were approved. Now, I urge you to pass the second two years of the plan. Let's see move forward and evaluate over the next two years to see what is working and what will need tweaking. To change the formula would be as useful as a pen without ink.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ari Klein

Co-Convenor for the Heights Coalition for Public Education