

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 33
Senate
Finance Committee
May 30, 2023
Abigail McAtee, LSW /Parent of CCS Elementary student.

Chair Matt Dolan, Vice Chair Jerry Cirino, Ranking Member Vernon Sykes, and members of the Finance committee of the Ohio Senate:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Abigail McAtee, LSW.

I am a parent at Westgate Alternative Elementary school. My son and I live in the North Hilltop neighborhood and lottery into the Westgate Alternative elementary school. There is a clear imbalance of funding between Columbus public school systems and private/Charter schools. Public schools are understaffed, and lack extracurricular activities including after school activities. Not so mention the increased concerns over security within the Columbus city school district as a whole. There is no reason that Columbus City Public schools should lack the appropriate school funding. Especially considering the increased properties being built and the high profits being made.

I am here to advocate for more school funding within the districts. I am fully in support of the Fair school Funding plan outlined in HB33. I think that it would have many positive impacts on the Columbus community as a whole not just with the students.

I have lived in the Columbus area for about 20 years, and have been a licensed Social worker for almost 10 years. In this time, I have seen the growth within the city and the increase needs that the city has including school funding. I have Volunteered as a coach for a few seasons with the Columbus Park and rec programs. I love Columbus and want to continue to advocate for its positive growth. However, security has been one of the biggest concerns I have had as a parent. Especially with the increased incidents with gun violence with people under the age of 18. My son just turned 6 today, and unfortunately, we were at the Westgate Columbus Parks and rec center last year when there was a fatal shooting just yards way from his school and feet away from the playgrounds. Luckily for us we were inside the rec center when this tragedy took place and I was able to hide the fact that there was a dead body lying on the ground outside this time. I am concerned that in the future that may not be the case. These incidents, and school treats just continue to grow every day. Children are the future and I think it is the best investment of money to invest in them.

And professionally I worked in a waiver program and had a few teenage children that were shot by senseless Violence or their involvement with the wrong people. This may have been able to be prevented if schools had more resources to keep kids engaged and off the streets.

I think that school funding would increase kids' evolvment in school and extra circular programs, and it would decrease the amount of Juvenile crime within the city. Having more

money would help create more opportunities to support families and give them the resources that they need to have beneficial outcomes, and also help increase the sense of community.

In addition, it could pay staff of schools fair wages for the work they do every day. As a social worker I never understood why the social work professions working with children (anything out side hospital setting) were the most underpaid jobs, and with Teachers just being right behind that. They should be the highest paid jobs. Investing in our children is investing in the future of the City and the Country. Especially the children who need us the most!

I am advocating for the support of HB33 because not only will it impact our children in a positive way, but it will impact the future of the whole city. Kids are the future and we should invest in them to the fullest capacity. I ask you to please consider my testimony and vote yes to fund the Fair school funding plan. It is important that you consider fully and permanently funding the he Fair School Funding Plan now.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Abigail McAtee, LSW

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abigail McAtee', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.