

Testimony of Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen  
Before the Ohio House Education Committee  
Representative Fowler Arther, Chair  
February 21, 2025

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen, and I am a concerned citizen submitting testimony in opposition to HB96. My family currently benefits from Ohio public schools, and we want to keep them as the strong institutions of learning and not weaken the public's access to FREE and APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION guaranteed to Americans by law.

As a faculty member at Ohio State University, I am reminded daily of the importance of quality and accessible education, which should be available to every child in Ohio. As a parent, I know it is essential that Ohio demonstrate its commitment to public schools by investing more, not less, funding in ensuring students receive an equal and accessible education through the public-school districts. Prior to beginning my career in academia, I was a secondary school teacher and taught at both charter and public schools, and my time at both demonstrated clearly that students are not well-served by charter or school choice programs that remove resources from our public schools. Instead, the students with the greatest support needs or who started each year with the largest equity gap were overlooked, harmed, and further marginalized by alternative school options that took a portion of public-school funding. While our public-school systems may not be perfect, the solution is greater investment and funding in them and prioritizing student equity and well-resourced educators to solve the education challenges that face Ohioans.

I am writing to object to the draconian cuts proposed in HB96 which will take crucial dollars out of our public schools. NINETY percent of Ohio students attend public schools. Cutting public school funding does nothing to improve the state of education in the great state of Ohio but rather weakens our ability to educate the next generation of leaders. If we want Ohio to continue to be a state that educates its citizens, we must not weaken our public-school systems. I urge Ohio legislatures to stand against this unpopular bill. Ohioans are not interested in this biased and politically motivated plan.

Let us actually strengthen the public-school systems we have in the State of Ohio. I submit this testimony in opposition to this harmful bill. I urge moderate and thoughtful action to move Ohio forward – not backward.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen  
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