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Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur, Chair, Education Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives, Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215
OHReductioncommittee@ohiohouse.gov

RE: Written Testimony for Education Committee Meeting on 2/25/2025 at 14:15

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

Thank you for allowing my testimony. My name is Stuart Luyckx, and I write to urge the committee to INCLUDE the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget and INCLUDE inflation in inputs.

I am a chemical engineer and active parent of two young boys. I testify today as a beneficiary of public-school investment. I personally benefitted from extra resources in my public-school education, including the Gifted and Talented, Advanced Placement, foreign language, and music programs. Although I was born in a state ranked at the bottom for public-education, these programs helped me to graduate as a valedictorian in my class of over 500 and attend a top school, matriculating nearly as a sophomore with credits from AP exams. About 6 years ago, I left my career in petroleum engineering to become a full-time parent. In many ways, parenting is the harder job, and it has given me appreciation for both the education that I received, as well as for those who dedicate their lives to educate our children.

For the past decade, research shows that the best predictor of success in America now is who your parents are. And to the kids who didn't make the right choice, the members that would vote to cut education funding say *"Sorry, kid, you are on your own."* It seems we have gone a long way from *"but for the grace of God, there go I."*

To add insult to injury, we have structured our society in profoundly anti-family and anti-children ways. As a result of the decline in real wages over the past 2 generations, families have made ends meet by working more hours. They are under profound pressure. Just last year, the US Surgeon General issued an advisory that highlights the current stresses on parents. Parents are twice as likely to say that most days they are so stressed they cannot function, and *"the stresses parents and caregivers have today are being passed to children in direct and indirect ways, impacting families and communities across America."* Compounding this, unsupported and stressed educators do the same. It is hard for kids to learn in an environment that keeps their threat response activated with high levels of cortisol.

A robust education system is foundational to our modern economy. We all saw how things ground to a halt in the early days of 2020, when schools and daycares went remote. Parents make up a significant part of the workforce, but they cannot work if their kids are not well cared for.

My friends on the right consistently lament the continuing decline in fertility rates, but usually fail to connect the dots. **MAKE NO MISTAKE, THIS IS ONE OF THOSE REASONS.**

Funding public education supports children. Funding public education supports parents. Funding public education supports communities. Research consistently demonstrates that funding public education is a good investment, getting a return of two dollars for every dollar invested. We are not spending money on public schools; we are investing in the future of Ohio.

Diverting public funds to private charter schools and voucher programs does not provide widespread benefit to society. It serves to rob the public of much needed educational funding, for the benefit of a few special interests. And it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. As public-school performance drops due to inadequate funding, the argument that public schools are failing serves to bolster further cuts, resulting in a death spiral.

And let's be clear about why this is happening. We are discussing cuts to education today because the oldest of reasons—GREED. It has been reported that the purpose of these proposed cuts is to set the groundwork for pushing lower taxes to those that need it the least. But saving a few hundred dollars on state taxes means little if the community around you is breaking at the seams.

I appeal to the humanity of the committee members to show courage, and stand up to the most extreme voices, which are unfortunately often the loudest. We must do the hard work to improve our public education system in Ohio, and that cannot happen without appropriate funding.

Three years ago, Intel announced a transformational investment here in the state of Ohio, potentially totaling \$100B. To put that amount in perspective, Honda has invested 1/7th of that over the past 40 years. One of the key reasons that Intel cited for selecting Ohio was its **skilled workforce**. Our current workforce is the result of educational investments a generation ago, and maintaining a skilled workforce is only possible through robust funding of public education. Sure, a few wealthy kids could get a better education at a private school, but they were going there anyways. And Intel is not moving here because of a few well-educated rich kids. A deep pool of skilled workers is only possible with widespread, quality public education.

ATMs did not displace bank tellers. They high-graded the tellers' responsibilities and made the job more complex. As automation accelerates, jobs of the future will continue requiring more knowledge and more skill. Where will that knowledge come from? Where will that skill come from? **A society that doesn't invest in its children has no future. We fund public education to our collective benefit, or we cut its funding at our peril.**

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget and include inflation in inputs. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Stuart Luyckx