

Catherine Buck-Kennedy

849 Marbea Drive

Loveland, OH 45140

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Catherine (Katie) Buck-Kennedy. I am a public retiree living in Loveland, OH. I recently retired from the Loveland City School District, where I worked as a secretary. All 3 of my children graduated from this district and have gone on to do good work while raising families of their own (2 have chosen to remain in the state). I'm writing to urge the committee to include the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget.

90% of Ohio students attend public schools, yet Ohio is in the bottom 10% of states nationwide that adequately support funding for their public schools. These statistics would make it appear to outsiders that Ohio does not value education for its youngest residents.

The Loveland City School District is a diverse district (across many factors) and is in the top 3% of Ohio Public School Districts across the state, yet it spends less than 55% of the other districts in the state. It has been very good at doing more with less, but that will be coming to an end, if the state further cuts funding to school districts.

The funding structure for Loveland City Schools is such that it is highly dependent on the residents of the district. There aren't any large companies to count on for a commercial tax base. The school district is the largest employer in the district. The well is running dry with residents for continuing levy asks for funding, as evidenced by levy failures. One of these failures eliminated my position at one of the schools after working there for 14 years.

The last 4.5 years I worked at another district school that I jokingly said was held together with spit and duct tape (no disrespect to the custodial and maintenance staff. They're awesome!). But the spittle is drying up and the tape is running out.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please include the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.