

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

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. My name is Lysa Knight, and I am a wife, mother of five, and an engaged constituent from House District #56. I work part-time as a paraprofessional in our local public school district and have been following school funding issues in Ohio for over a decade.

My family's educational journey is somewhat unique, as our children have experienced a wide range of educational settings. Our oldest two graduated from our local school district, while one is currently enrolled there, another is homeschooled, and our youngest attends a private school approximately 25 miles away.

I am writing today to urge the committee to include the third phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in Ohio's budget. Currently, the balance between state and local funding in our district is significantly skewed. Whenever the state reduces funding to our district, local taxpayers are left to fill the gap. Since moving to our current home, our district has passed two operating levies—one in 2016 and another in 2022. Furthermore, in March 2024, the community approved a bond levy to address overcrowding in our schools. According to our five-year forecast, our voters are about to be faced with another challenge, as our district we will need another operating levy in the near future.

This cycle of relying on local taxpayers is becoming unsustainable. We are approaching a critical tipping point where our community may feel compelled to vote against future school levies, which would have dire consequences for our youngest community members. The third phase of the Fair School Funding Plan has the potential to alleviate some of this financial burden on local taxpayers, and I sincerely hope you will support it.

Thank you for considering my request,

Lysa R. Knight