

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony today. My name is Susan Yutzey. I am a retired school library media specialist who taught information literacy skills to high school students in a public high school for thirteen years. I'm submitting this written testimony to urge the committee to continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget.

Of all the positions I held in the field of education, the thirteen years I spent as a library media specialist were the best. What made them the best? Students returning from their first year in college and thanking me and my colleague for teaching them how to conduct research, how to write an annotated work cited, how to determine the validity of a source. Critical thinking skills that are absolutely necessary in this age of social media.

I am aware that not all public schools in Ohio have the "luxury" of employing school library media specialists; I've done the research. I'm not pleading that all Ohio school districts hire school library media specialists – we tried that back in 2015. What I am saying is that our children, our youth, need the opportunity to attend well-funded public schools in Ohio. Ninety percent of our children attend public school and they should have the opportunity to attend schools that provide robust curriculum taught by highly qualified teachers and that are structurally safe regardless of their zip code.

Personally, as an Ohio taxpayer for over fifty years, I am opposed to my taxes going toward "private education." Funneling nearly \$1 billion in taxpayer dollars toward private schools in the form of vouchers, especially religious schools, violates the separation of church and state. Furthermore, the havoc cuts to public education will mean for Ohio school districts will place the burden of school funding on Ohio citizens, especially those on fixed incomes, living in those districts – this is unsustainable.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget. Thank you again for the opportunity to offer written testimony.

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