

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, and members of the Ohio House Education Committee,

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am a former educator who has taught at all levels in both public and private schools.

While I am in no way opposed to private schooling, tax dollars must be used ONLY for public schools. The Ohio Constitution could not be clearer. It requires the Ohio legislature to fund a thorough and efficient public education system that serves the common good.

In 1997, the Ohio Supreme Court, in *DeRolph v. State of Ohio*, ruled that Ohio's school funding system was unconstitutional because it did not provide adequate resources for quality education across the state, and relied too heavily on property taxes for funding.

In 2016, a bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan finally offered a transparent and sustainable school funding formula that used extensive research and best practices to determine the actual cost of educating a child. This plan needs to be fully funded!

Ninety percent of Ohio students attend public schools. I am a public school graduate, and so are my children. My Ohio grandchildren also attend public schools.

Unfortunately, public schools are too often forced to operate without sufficient resources, especially in lower-income communities or in communities that fail to pass levies. Many teachers wind up paying for teaching materials from their own pockets; I have done this myself, and so have most other teachers I have known.

Public schools truly are the backbone of our Ohio communities, and we must not short-change them by failing to provide adequate and fair funding.

Please continue phasing in the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into our Ohio budget.

Sincerely,

Deborah Cooper
Worthington, Ohio