

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

My name is Erin Madonio Latina and I am a concerned parent from Ohio. I am writing to urge the committee to continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget.

Governor Dewine's proposed budget seeks a \$103 million cut in public school funding and an increase in funding for vouchers of \$265 million. This is completely unsustainable! Because there is no cap put on the voucher expansion, this pattern of underfunding for public schools and overfunding tuition subsidies at private and charter schools will see no end in the foreseeable future.

When the state share of funding public education goes down, property taxes go up. School districts that in the past have had success with passing levies will find it more and more difficult to do so as property taxes rise ever higher and the state's share of funding sink ever lower. In Portage County this year we saw property tax increases of 30%. We have several districts in fiscal caution and little hope of passing a school levy based on the number of failures they have already endured.

Ohio's private school vouchers began as a pilot program but has now become a refund and rebate scheme to reimburse families already committed to sending their children to private schools. The drain on public schools has grown from \$42 million a year in 2008 to more than \$1 billion dollars in the 2023-24 school year. Ohio public school children are 81% of all Ohio school children but receive 79.4% of all K-12 funding in Ohio. Even Matt Huffman, Ohio Senate Chairman, recently said that the current funding formula for public schools is "unsustainable."

When it started as an experiment, the private school voucher program was \$1,229 per pupil. For the 2023-24 school year high school vouchers were \$8,407 and K-8 are worth \$6,165. Enough is enough!

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 provide testimony.

Erin Madonio Latina