

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 Brenda Moran Schaefer. I am a public school teacher with 27 years of teaching experience. I enjoy teaching despite all the changes and increased responsibilities that have been added to my workload over the years by Ohio's legislators. I have worked hard to provide students with the critical thinking skills they will need to graduate and be successful after high school. The community largely supports their public schools, however, they are frustrated that they keep paying more to keep the schools up-to-date. Therefore, I urge the committee to continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget.

For all the years I have been teaching, I have known that the way Ohio funds its public schools is unconstitutional. The question I have always had is why the Ohio Congress has not done its job in following the Ohio Constitution and fairly funding Ohio's public schools for so long. I am sure you are aware of this wording regarding Ohio's responsibility toward public education:

The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise, as, with the income arising from the school trust fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state; but no religious or other sect, or sects, shall ever have any exclusive right to, or control of, any part of the school funds of this state.

Because 90% of Ohio's students attend public schools, it logically follows that Ohio's legislators should be amply and fairly funding them rather than draining these funds and expanding vouchers. Those who support vouchers knowingly violate the state constitution when they are used for students to attend religious schools. News outlets Pro Publica, The Ohio

Capital-Journal, WKYC, 10tv, etc. have reported on this unconstitutional use of public funds. As Pro Publica author Alec MacGillis points out, "The risks of universal vouchers are quickly coming to light. An initiative that was promoted for years as a civil rights cause — helping poor kids in troubled schools — is threatening to become a nationwide money grab. Many private schools are raising tuition rates to take advantage of the new funding, and new schools are being

founded to capitalize on it.” Ohio has sadly promoted this money grab. Now is the time to rectify the issue that has continued to plague Ohio’s public schools and turned Ohio into a national disgrace for its corruption.

Please 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 testify.