

Testimony in Support of HB 127
Submitted to the Ohio House Education Committee
May 6, 2025

By Alyssa Bleijerveld, LISW
Licensed Independent Social Worker, Dayton, OH

Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in strong support of House Bill 127.

My name is Alyssa Bleijerveld, and I am a Licensed Independent Social Worker practicing in Dayton. I have spent several years working within school settings, supporting students and families navigating complex challenges—including trauma, abuse, custody issues, and mental health crises. I have witnessed firsthand the vital role schools play in keeping children safe—not only physically and emotionally, but also in safeguarding their personal information.

House Bill 127 seeks to address a critical gap in current law by allowing school districts, community schools, and STEM schools the discretion to withhold a student's directory information from public release. Under existing law, "directory information" may include a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in school activities, height and weight of athletes, and more. While this information may seem benign, in the wrong hands, it can pose real and lasting risks.

Many families believe their children's information is fully protected under federal laws like FERPA or COPPA, and they are often unaware that this type of data can still be released without their explicit consent. In my experience as a school social worker, I encountered multiple situations where the release of such information would have been not only inappropriate, but potentially dangerous—especially in cases involving restraining orders, abusive family members, or custody disputes. In these situations, access to a child's school, activities, or location could escalate risk and compromise the safety of the student and their family.

Beyond these individual scenarios, we must also consider the broader context: we live in an era where identity theft, online exploitation, and child trafficking are increasing threats. The more widely a child's personal information is disseminated, the more vulnerable they—and their families—become. It is no longer sufficient to assume that this type of information is low-risk; the consequences of exposure can be severe.

HB 127 offers a simple but powerful solution. By permitting districts to opt not to release directory information, this bill closes a loophole that most families do not even realize exists. It empowers local education leaders to prioritize student privacy and safety, and it aligns Ohio law more closely with the expectations and concerns of today's parents and caregivers.

I urge you to support HB 127 and take this essential step to protect Ohio's students and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Alyssa Bleijerveld, LISW
Licensed Independent Social Worker
Dayton, Ohio