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## Columbus Office

Vern Riffe Center  
77 S. High Street, 14th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111  
(614) 644-8728  
[Rep95@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:Rep95@ohiohouse.gov)  
[www.ohiohouse.gov](http://www.ohiohouse.gov)



State Representative Don Jones

## **Sponsor Testimony**

### **H.B. 205: Enact the Future Educators Support Act**

Good afternoon Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso and Ranking Member Robinson and fellow members of the Ohio House Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony for H.B. 205.

As a former teacher for 23 years, I am familiar with the urgent need for this legislation.

Paying student teachers for their hard work not only values their contributions but also strengthens our school systems by improving teacher retention. In the long run, this benefits students, families, and entire communities.

How can we expect to draw talented individuals into teaching if we don't pay them during their training? Why should aspiring educators be expected to *pay* to work a full-time job?

No other profession expects full-time work without compensation—why should teaching be any different?

Importantly, this legislation gives school districts flexibility. They can utilize a waiver system that fits within their budget, allowing them to implement compensation in a manageable way. Student teachers would be eligible to receive at least the state minimum wage and access the same healthcare benefits offered to other teachers in the district.

This bill is a step in the right direction. New teachers already start with lower-than-average salaries. Providing financial support during their training makes it more feasible for people to enter and stay in the profession.

I appreciate you allowing me to speak today about H.B. 205. I encourage your support of this bill, which will strengthen our education system by investing in the next generation of teachers.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.