Date:5/17/25

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

My name is Michael Modzeleski, and I currently serve as the Principal of Holy Trinity School in Avon, Ohio. Prior to my role as principal, I was a social studies teacher. In both of these roles, I found it a privilege to shape the minds of many students and wanted all of them to understand the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.

I am writing today in support of House Bill 117, introduced by Representative Tracy Richardson, which would require the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in all K–12 schools across the State of Ohio.

This bill resonates with me both professionally and personally. As a school leader, I believe strongly in the formative power of routine, reflection, and shared values. At Holy Trinity, we begin our day with morning announcements that include the Pledge of Allegiance. This is a practice that instills not only discipline and unity but also a sense of gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy as citizens of this country.

As a former social studies teacher, I took great pride in teaching my students the significance of the Pledge of Allegiance and other foundational symbols of our democracy. I made it a priority to ensure that when my students left my classroom, they not only knew the words to the Pledge but also understood what those words represented. It is important to understand those core values of freedom, unity, responsibility, and sacrifice. I firmly believe that these lessons helped shape students into more informed and appreciative citizens, with a deeper respect for the country they call home.

The Pledge of Allegiance is far more than a routine or a recitation; it is a daily civic ritual that unites students of all backgrounds under a shared national identity. It reminds us that our freedoms are not accidents of history, but the result of courageous service and enduring values.

In a time when so much pulls our communities apart, this bill invites students to start each day with unity, reflection, and respect. It also opens a valuable opportunity for teachers to engage

students in the meaning of the words they recite, helping to develop citizens who are both informed and engaged.

I commend Representative Richardson for this common-sense legislation and urge the committee to advance House Bill 117. Thank you for your time, your service to Ohio's students, and your thoughtful consideration of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Modzeleski
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