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Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 322, which would enact the Ohio Fitness Test, a statewide physical fitness benchmark for school-age children modeled after the well-known Presidential Fitness Award.

Many of us grew up taking part in the Presidential Fitness Challenge—push-ups, sit-ups, mile runs—and proudly earning that certificate if we met the national standards. For decades, it was a rite of passage and a motivating tool that helped encourage healthy habits from a young age.

Unfortunately, the program was discontinued in 2012. And since that time, we've seen a concerning trend: childhood obesity rates have continued to rise. According to the CDC, the obesity rate among children and adolescents has increased more than 20% in the past decade. This isn't just about physical health—these trends are linked to increases in Type 2 diabetes, depression, and decreased academic performance.

House Bill 322 brings back the best of what the Presidential Fitness Award stood for: accountability, motivation, and pride in personal achievement. The Ohio Fitness Test will establish clear, age-appropriate standards in five areas of physical fitness—cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, body composition, and agility.

This isn't about punishment or pass/fail—it's about giving students a tangible goal to work toward and providing parents, schools, and policymakers with valuable data to help reverse the course of declining youth health.

What makes this effort even more important is its bipartisan support. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle recognize the need to promote physical wellness and build a culture of fitness starting in our schools.

This is a bill about common sense, public health, and our future. It's about helping Ohio's kids lead longer, healthier lives.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 322, and I'm happy to answer any questions.