

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Felix Prewitt. I am in my first year of college at The Ohio State University as a School of Education pre-major. As a future educator, I strongly support H.B. 523.

I've known that I have a passion for teaching since I began tutoring math students in high school. Nothing has brought me greater fulfillment than sharing with young people the knowledge they need to lead a successful life. Despite this, I did not enroll in college as an education major. I knew becoming a teacher was an extreme academic commitment that, despite my strong aptitude, was too much of a financial burden to place on my family. A part-time job in the mornings before and afternoons after classes sustained me in my first semester, but the time commitment of an education degree is too high for me to continue working as I further my studies. My family is struggling as-is, with two young children in elementary school, and supporting me through over two academic years' worth of field experience and student teaching is quite the investment.

I am far from the only student in this position. Many of my peers who have an incredible drive and passion for teaching have resigned themselves to fields they don't care about solely due to the financial burden of earning an education degree and maintaining a classroom. I stayed out of education for some time for the same reasons, only taking the plunge weeks into my second semester after my extended family offered to pitch in. Many organizations¹ corroborate this lack of resources as a leading cause of the teacher shortage nationwide. If the financial burden were to be lessened, I am certain that this would create enough future educators out of acquaintances of mine alone to replace the entire teaching staff of the high school I graduated from.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote YES on this life-changing bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

1 Including the [Learning Policy Institute](#) and [Center for American Progress](#), among others