

Opponent Testimony for Proposed State Budget FY 2025-2026
House Finance Committee
March 11, 2025

Sharon Rotblatt MSW, LISW, LICDC

Chair Brian Stewart, Vice Chair Michael Dovilla, Ranking Member Bride Rose Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for accepting and admitting my written testimony today. My name is Sharon Rotblatt (she/her). I am a resident of Bentleyville and a licensed social worker and chemical dependency counselor in Ohio. I am also the parent of three young adults who all attended Ohio public primary and secondary schools and public universities.

I am submitting this testimony to oppose the sections of the proposed state budget FY 2025-2026 that will impact public education in Ohio. After reviewing the proposed financial cuts and reassignments, I am deeply concerned about the quality of education that will be available for young Ohioans.

I am a proud graduate of Cleveland Heights High School ('83) and my children are graduates of Solon High School ('09, '11, '16). I strongly believe in the value of public education to introduce students to varied viewpoints, lifestyles, and cultures. While we were fortunate to raise our family in a community that had the financial means to support excellent education, I recognize that many communities in Ohio do not have that ability and rely on the government (state and federal) to fund schools and pay qualified teachers.

Of the 88 counties in Ohio, 70 have only public education available for students. While vouchers might be helpful in economically disadvantaged area, the facts show that most students using vouchers were already attending private/parochial/charter schools prior and thus have the financial means to continue to attend. What about the students in those 70 counties, that have no other options? If funding is reduced for those schools, the students will receive a subpar education, leaving them unqualified to hold jobs or attend higher education that could ultimately benefit our state.

Public education is a fundamental right for all students. We owe it to our young Ohio residents to give them a strong start in life so they may realize their potential and help to improve our state and country. I ask you to review and revise the school funding portion of the state budget in order to serve all Ohio students fairly and equally.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sharon Rotblatt MSW, LISW, LICDC