

House Finance Committee

House Bill 96

March 12, 2025

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair, Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee. I would like to speak to you regarding (HB) 96, the biennial budget and the Fair School Funding Plan. My name Becky Roe, I am a resident of Pickaway County and live in the Teays Valley Local School District. I'm also an employee of a local school district in Franklin County Ohio.

During my lifetime, the fact is, schools have not been adequately funded, and children's education has suffered from inequalities across this state. While some school districts have been very fortunate to pass a levy, others have not. What the state does not fund it has created a burden on the taxpayer. In my area, Teays Valley local schools are at capacity (enrolled ADM 4327.59) per FY24 CUPP report, the anticipated growth over the next several years is projected to be 18%. Taxpayers voted against a levy due to the cost of building new schools and knowing an operating levy later to fund them will be necessary. This was prior to Anduril's announcement to bring over 4,000 jobs to Ohio while building Arsenal-1, a five million square foot facility in Pickaway County.

With the new businesses coming to central Ohio such as Intel, Google, Microsoft, Honda, LG Energy, and Anduril, our children must have the skills and education necessary to compete for these future positions. I am perplexed as to why you would allow the base cost not to be reflective with today's economic prices. This absolutely makes no sense to me.

Taxpayers have been impacted greatly across Ohio, with property revaluations, mortgages, insurance, costs of food, gas, utilities, and other services have increased in double digits. As a taxpayer, the economic atmosphere is very volatile right now, it's extremely hard to save money during times of higher prices and inflation. These are serious pain points and are real costs for taxpayers. The costs not only impact the working class, but retirees and poor alike who live on a fixed income. Their budgets have been stretched

to the max. Knowing that the fair school funding plan would be using base costs that are not responsive to our current economic state is just incomprehensible to me.

It makes no sense; we must have a funding formula that responds to real economic changes by updating the base cost inputs. Otherwise, you are creating a burden for families and children who are depending on you, our elected officials, to do the right thing for all residents of Ohio. Local taxpayers cannot take on more financial burden, the money is not there. I have but one voice but feel I speak for many working class people, retirees, and the poor who are in this situation.

I am here today to request on behalf of our children, Ohio school districts, and taxpayers that you make the critical decisions toward fully implementing the formula enacted in the last two biennial budgets, a formula which was collaboratively created with school district leaders and practitioners across Ohio.

As a mother, a grandmother, and a taxpayer, I feel without providing a solid education to all children, we are not successful. We are not producing the education a child needs to be a successful adult. The jobs being brought into Ohio need educated children to do the job, so these businesses remain in Ohio for many years to come. We cannot give and take in education every budget cycle; we must stand firm in our process and remain dedicated to our children of this state. Frankly, I am tired of Ohio schools not being adequately funded and I implore you to create the changes necessary to create real change. As elected officials, I am counting on you to be the change we need to see once and for all on fair school funding.

Please, take the next step to ensure our children, my grandchildren, have a proper and solid education foundation to flourish in this world and in these jobs that are coming to our great state. They will not have a chance if money is taken from them. I urge the House to continue the formula's phase in with the most updated base cost inputs.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and my hope is that you will consider my words and that as elected officials you hear my voice.