

**House Finance Committee**

**March 13, 2025**

**Written Interested Party Testimony**

**HB 96, State Operating Budget**

**Elana Bernstein, PhD, NCSP, Assistant Professor, School Psychology Program  
Coordinator, University of Dayton**

Chairwoman Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 96. As the Program & Internship Coordinator for the School Psychology program at the University of Dayton, I am writing to express my strong support for increasing the funding line item for the school psychology internship.

I have been supervising and coordinating the internship experience for school psychology trainees since 2011. My students struggle to support themselves during the internship year at the current salary allotted to school districts for the intern. Many of my students complete their initial years of training part time while working in a related field (i.e., teachers, intervention specialists, etc.) so entering internship they take a substantial pay cut to complete it (upward of \$30,000).

Becoming a school psychologist is an expensive endeavor, which presents an impediment to many individuals. Given the substantial shortages in our field and the growing mental health needs of K-12 students in Ohio, the increase to the intern funding is needed now more than ever. Please consider the request for increased funds as an investment in Ohio's future workforce.