Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for accepting testimony on HB 96.

My name is John Dutton. I teach computer science at MC^{2}STEM High School in Cleveland Metropolitan School District. I am also the President of the Computer Science Teachers' Association of Ohio (CSTA Ohio). I graduated in 2002 with a degree in Computer Science from Case Western Reserve University, and I have been in the classroom for 21 years. I work with dozens of computer science teachers in and around Cleveland who benefit from the teacher licensure waiver while they work towards full licensure.

Access to a Computer Science class	
Ohio	*61%*
Pennsylvania	75%
West Virginia	78%
Kentucky	78%
Indiana	91%

In addition to the stark numbers above, many Ohio schools dropped computer science last school year. To fix this problem, I respectfully urge you to support an amendment to the state budget to renew the computer science teacher licensure waiver before it expires on June 30th.

This waiver is a commonsense, uncontroversial policy that has been renewed with bipartisan support in every two-year budget since 2020. Used by dozens of teachers every year, this waiver is an essential option that allows teachers who have completed professional development to teach computer science while they work towards earning a full endorsement.

Not renewing the waiver all but assures that the number of teachers able to teach computer science will plummet. Ohio can't risk falling further behind surrounding states in access to this critical subject when we already trail every state around us except Michigan in the percentage of high schools offering computer science.

Supporting computer science teachers ensures our students won't get left behind in the digital economy, and that Ohio can continue to be a target for innovation and economic

growth. Please include the amendment to renew the computer science teacher licensure waiver in the omnibus budget bill.

Why should we make this commitment to computer science?

- We hear about Artificial Intelligence all of the time in our personal and professional lives; computer science concepts are key to AI literacy and development.

- Computer science teaches students computational thinking, problem-solving, and data analysis, skills that are not only relevant for every career, but that show students how to think creatively about any problem. I often say that computer science *tricks* students into doing math!

- Ohio is falling further behind neighboring states that have supported computer science education for years; remaining behind most other states and countries endangers our workforce and security.

Investing in K-12 computer science will help fill in-demand jobs, and help Ohio position itself as a leader on critical technology education.

Thank you,

John Dutton
Teacher, MC²STEM High School, Cleveland, Ohio
President, CSTA Ohio