

Chair Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Joseph Kaiser. I am a resident of Norwalk, OH, a community member who believes deeply in civil liberties, student safety, and the fundamental rights guaranteed to every person in Ohio—regardless of background or immigration status.

I am strongly opposed to HB 42.

HB 42 would require state agencies, including public school districts, to collect and report data related to the citizenship or immigration status of the individuals they come into contact with—including students. This proposal is deeply harmful, unnecessary, and fundamentally incompatible with federal law, modern best practices in education, and constitutional protections.

Forcing schools to track and report immigration status will create fear, confusion, and significant barriers to education. Since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), it has been a settled constitutional principle that every child—regardless of immigration status—is entitled to a free public education. Schools cannot ask about or document immigration status for the purpose of excluding or tracking students. HB 42 threatens to undermine that landmark protection by pressuring districts to function as immigration data collectors instead of educators.

The consequences of such a requirement are predictable and devastating. Families will withdraw from school events, avoid communicating with teachers, and in some cases, may even keep their children home, fearing that their information could be used against them. We know from decades of educational research that trust between schools and families is foundational to student learning. HB 42 deliberately destroys that trust.

This bill would also place impossible burdens on teachers, administrators, and school staff who already manage overwhelming workloads. Schools are not immigration agencies. They are not trained, equipped, or legally permitted to determine a family's immigration status. Nor should they be. Creating bureaucratic systems to collect sensitive personal data—data that federal guidelines warn should *not* be collected—will strain already underfunded districts and expose them to serious legal liability.

Additionally, Ohio communities have spoken loudly in recent years about valuing safety, dignity, and inclusion in schools. HB 42 pushes in the opposite direction. It invites discrimination, harassment, and racial profiling, especially for students of color, English-language learners, and children from immigrant families—many of whom are U.S. citizens. It divides communities, pits neighbors against one another, and forces educators into a role they never asked for and should never be required to play.

Ohio's schools should be places where students feel safe to learn, not surveilled. HB 42 violates that principle.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful, un-American, and profoundly misguided bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

