



Senate Education Committee

House Bill 96

Molly Snodgrass, Concerned Parent in Big Walnut Local School District

May 7, 2025

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on House Bill (HB) 96, the biennial budget. My name is Molly Snodgrass, and I am a deeply concerned parent of two young boys in the Big Walnut Local School district.

I have lived almost all of my life in Ohio, and attended Poland Local Schools in Poland, Ohio for my entire primary and secondary education. I am where I am today because of the high quality of education I received through public schools, and I value public education highly. It is one of the greatest goods a society provide for its youth—education. I sincerely wish for my sons to also have a great experience and receive a high-quality education in one of Ohio's public school districts, Big Walnut. However, I have serious concerns about the future of not just Big Walnut schools, but all public schools in Ohio, should HB 96 (as passed by the House) become law in its current form.

There are two significant issues with the current HB 96, with regard to public education:

First, it arbitrarily imposes a cap of 30% of the previous year's expenditures on the amount of funds that a district can carry forward, with the amount in excess of 30% to be returned to local property owners through a reduction in the next year's property tax collections. While property tax relief for Ohioans is a noble pursuit, **tax relief should not come at the expense of public schools and the 90% of Ohio students which they serve.** This provision would be detrimental to school districts in Ohio, requiring many to place a levy on the ballot as soon as November 2025 to avoid dire fiscal scenarios or significant reductions in programming and services—even when no levy was previously forecasted. It likely would require even more frequent levy asks, in smaller more frequent increments, as districts would need to walk a fine line between exceeding the 30% carryover limit and pushing their district into Fiscal Watch or Fiscal Emergency territory. This is absurd and would not provide any meaningful property tax relief without severely hamstringing public schools. The ones who would suffer the most from that, of course, are Ohio's children and families. **I ask that you remove the provision limiting a district's carryover funds** and trust local communities to fund their schools at the levels they see fit.

Second, it abandons the Fair School Funding Plan and returns to the days where public school funding is at the whim of legislators and what they desire to spend, instead of what schools and students need. Not only that, but it still does not use updated base cost inputs in the calculations it does use to determine funding levels, even though it uses current data for a district's funding "capacity". This results in a broken formula that **funds public schools at lower levels than when school funding was deemed unconstitutional in the first place** for being overly reliant on local property taxes. This is completely unacceptable. How can the state find \$600 million to invest in a sports stadium, but not the funds to invest in its most cherished resource, its children? **I ask that you reinstate the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan with current cost inputs** to fund public schools at the levels they deserve.

Again, I humbly ask you to prioritize the 90% of Ohio students in public schools as much as you prioritize the 10% of students in charter and non-public schools, a group which is expected to receive hundreds of millions in additional funding in HB 96 through the expanded Ed Choice program. **Many parents' first choice is a fully funded public school. Do not discount the millions of families who choose public schools.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Snodgrass