

Ohio Senate Education Committee
H.B. 96 OPPONENT WRITTEN TESTIMONY
May 5th, 2025

Dear Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the potential cap being placed on K-12 school funding in Ohio, as well as the timing of anticipated reductions to the Fair School Funding Plan. While I understand the intent behind establishing financial limits, I worry that such measures may lead to unintended consequences, ultimately resulting in more frivolous spending rather than meaningful financial stewardship.

Instead of returning unallocated funds to taxpayers, I fear that schools may simply redirect these resources toward non-essential expenditures, avoiding necessary long-term planning. Without the ability to earmark funds for permanent improvements and future revenue needs, schools may find themselves in a position where they must continuously increase expenditures, placing additional levies on the ballot. This cycle could lead to voter fatigue, making it increasingly difficult to secure the funding needed for essential educational priorities.

Additionally, the timing of reductions to the Fair School Funding Plan presents an immediate challenge. Implementing substantial funding cuts so close to the start of the school year could leave schools scrambling to adjust their budgets and reconsider financial commitments they had already anticipated. Significant funding changes should be planned with a future implementation year to provide districts with sufficient time to reevaluate their financial strategies without compromising essential programs and services.

As both a home educator and a public-school board member, I am a strong advocate for school choice and ensuring that students have access to a range of educational options. However, it is equally important that any funding cap incorporates clear provisions for future expenditures, allowing schools to remain fully funded and continue making lasting improvements. Without these safeguards, there is a risk that funds will be allocated to non-essential items rather than being returned to taxpayers, ultimately undermining the intended purpose of the cap.

I hope the committee carefully considers these challenges and works toward solutions that ensure the financial stability of our schools. I trust that the committee will take the necessary steps to balance long-term improvements with fiscal responsibility. I look forward to seeing the recommendations that emerge from these discussions and how they will support both educational excellence and prudent financial decision-making.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Annie Payne

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Testimony provided on my own behalf and not on behalf of either board