

Testimony for House Bill 96
Senate Education Committee
May 6, 2025
Elizabeth Tull Laureano, Attorney

Chair Andrew Brenner, Vice Chair Bill Blessing, Ranking Member Catherine Ingram, and members of the Education committee of the Ohio Senate:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Tull Laureano.

I am a homeowner and parent of 2 children in the Forest Hills School District, in Anderson Township, Hamilton County.. My children attend our neighborhood public elementary school. The decades of community support for high quality schools is a major reason my husband and I decided to settle in this community nearly eight years ago.

I am testifying in support of public schools, and to advocate for changes to the budget as it currently proposes to reduce funding to public schools throughout the state. I support fully funding Ohio's public schools in the budget bill. I ask that this body **eliminate the cap on cash balance, protect the guarantee for districts like Forest Hills Local School District, and fully phase in the Fair School Funding Plan.**

My spouse and I chose public schools for our children because we appreciate the strong sense of community nurtured by neighborhood schools. We have been incredibly impressed by the strong academic offerings, the professionalism and expertise of the teachers and building administrators, and the high level of parental engagement in our elementary school.

However, our school district will suffer if the current budget bill becomes a reality. Recent property tax increases across southwest Ohio have already stressed residents' finances. Reducing funding to school districts will almost certainly lead districts to ask residents for needed funding via property tax levies. Eliminating the cap on cash balance will likely have the same result. I worry greatly about what may happen to our neighborhood and communities across the state if statewide funding for public schools continues to be reduced.

Again, please keep children like mine and their many peers around Ohio who attend and depend upon public schools. I ask that you consider my testimony and vote to fund the Fair School Funding Plan and vote against eliminating the cap on cash balance carry over. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.