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Senate Education Committee:

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today regarding HB 96.. My name is Rebecca Moates. I am a community member in Loveland, Ohio. I am a Nurse Practitioner, and have worked in nursing for 18 years. My husband and I are both Air Force veterans. After our military service, we moved to Loveland due to the strong public schools for our 4 children. We have worked hard to be educated citizens and we are proud to call Ohio home.

Today, I'm here to urge the committee to include 3 things:

1. Please keep the current guarantee for Fair School Funding. Losing this would be catastrophic to our district.
2. Provide increases that match the current inflationary levels. This speaks for itself, we need to sustain at a reasonable level.
3. Remove the cash balance provision from HB96. This creates punishment for our school being fiscally responsible with funding.

As a mother and NP working in pediatrics, I have seen public schools create success stories for students across the board. The access to specialized services for our children with different abilities, the arts programs that give a middle schooler a home and a community, the 3 year old with speech support needs, the child with ADHD who benefits from a 504, the gifted child being able to access a specialized teacher, these and many other examples are the reason we must continue to fully support our public schools in Ohio. There have been times when I have had the hard conversation with a parent where a private school was not able to give them these same resources. The public schools show up for all kids.

Our public schools build our communities and our economy. People move to Loveland for our schools. Loveland ranks with only 18 other schools in the top 3% in the state. 5 stars in all 5 categories! Loveland also sits in the bottom 15% of state funding per pupil This speaks to the responsibility of our school district with funding. As a school district, the schools and the community show up in support and we do more with less.

In Ohio, public schools support 90% of school children in the state. The Fair School Funding plan was enacted to help alleviate the unconstitutional levy system Ohio uses to tax local communities to offset state and federal costs. As someone who has worked hard to help get votes from private citizens to continue investing in our schools through levies, I think we can all agree, Fair School Funding is a priority to continue.

I spent my childhood strongly influenced by the academic world. My Grandmother (retired now) was the director at a Montessori she helped start and even now still advocates as well for their local public school district. All 4 of my grandparents worked at BGSU and were strong advocates of education. While the majority of my Grandparents have passed on, I am encouraged by their legacy to continue to advocate for all children to be supported. My Grandfather's favorite quote was, "The grandchildren deserve no less." This rings true for not only his grandchildren he tirelessly worked for but all children in the state of Ohio today.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support our Ohio Public School Students. Please protect the guarantee and continue the success of our wonderful students. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Rebecca M Moates