

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Erin Prestwich. I live and vote in Toledo, Ohio. I am also a professor in the Pharmacy School at the University of Toledo. I am here to urge the committee to restore the Public Library Fund to AT LEAST a fixed 1.7% of state revenue (the current amount).

I use libraries here in Toledo for many reasons. I borrow books to read with my nephews who are home schooled. Without these books, we will not be able to teach them. I am writing a children's book, and have also borrowed books to help me read others in the field and can talk to librarians about the materials. I have also used the library to meet people to mentor others in the community. It is an important safe for others to gather. Libraries also can offer things such as media, art, artifacts, classes, and lectures. I have been an avid reader through my whole life, and libraries are an important part of my life, and I want that to be an important life to others too. Libraries are essential, and we need funding.

I am also here to urge the committee to remove section 3375.47 from the operating budget bill. This section would require public libraries to place certain books in a portion of the library that is not primarily open to the view of minors.

This mandate would force local libraries to move or remove any mention of LGBTQ+ people, any gender expression such as boys "acting like boys," and many child and teen biographies, literary fiction, romance, history, and age-appropriate sex education. Children need to know more about gender before most parents are ready to talk to them about it. I "acted like a boy" as a child, like climbing trees, playing with trucks in the dirt. I am not transgender, and never thought that I was, but I did enjoy reading books as a child who did things that I wanted to do. That is normal. It is important for children to read about characters that are like them. I sought out information in libraries to understand what was happening to my body because my body changed in elementary school. The book, "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," by Judy Blume, was one of favorite books as a child. This information is important for children, because it is happening in earlier biological ages. They need to know that they are normal.

I am here to urge the committee to restore the Public Library Fund to AT LEAST a fixed 1.7% of state revenue (the current amount), and remove section 3375.47 from the operating budget bill.

Sincerely,

Erin Prestwich, Ph.D.
Toledo, Ohio