

Senators, I am a mother, grandmother, former practicing attorney and educator, and retired pastor. I am a product of public, private religious, and private independent schools. My children attended primarily private schools. I have two grandchildren presently attending Cleveland Heights public schools, one in 11th grade and one in kindergarten. I serve as a weekly volunteer reading tutor for my granddaughter's kindergarten class. In other words, I am familiar with the concerns of parents (and teachers and grandparents and students and community members) across the school spectrum, and I look out for the education of my grandchildren very closely.

I would be remiss if I did not also share with you that in all my years of education, including two graduate degrees, under many skilled and inspiring educators, my best teacher, hands down, was my 6th grade teacher Mr. Robert Curran, Jr. in the then-Harlan-Butlerville Elementary School in Warren County. In a small rural school with few resources beyond a building, a playground in the midst of cow pastures, and dedicated teachers, Mr. Curran brought science to life for us in ways that far exceeded the expected curriculum.

Mr. Curran's multitude of gifts, and those of teachers like him, as well as the students they serve from all walks of life and with all the gifts and challenges they bring to the classroom, should not be short-changed and undercut as they would be by House Budget Bill 96.

I urge the Ohio Senate to make substantial modifications to House Bill 96 in at least the following areas:

- The budget passed by the House last week would **reduce the state school board membership** from 11 elected members and eight governor-appointed members to five, all appointed by the governor.
 - While the state board has been left with little actual power after recent changes, it would be further weakened as a democratic body if this proposal stands.
- The proposed budget includes **a provision to increase the per-student allocation for charter school capital** costs from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
 - A 50% increase! (And how do I know that? Because I learned to calculate percentages in an Ohio public elementary school in the 1960s!) All while the same bill substantially decreases public school funding! (See next.)
- The bipartisan and constitutional **Fair School Funding Plan's** statistics would require public schools to be granted \$666 million, but the proposed budget gives them about \$226 million.
 - The House bill has decimated the Fair School Funding Plan
 - And . . . the House's budget also **gives private schools double that of public schools — \$500 million.**

House Bill 96 does a gross injustice to the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. My grandchildren are among them, and I am watching closely.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Mary Robin Craig

Cleveland Heights OH 44106

revrobincraig@gmail.com

216-233-2307