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To the Ohio State Legislature:

I am very concerned about several provisions in the budget recently proposed by the Ohio House and anticipate that they will have a negative impact on Ohio's public school students.

First, the budget's failure to fully fund the Fair School Funding Plan is very disappointing, especially in light of the huge amounts of state money being diverted to non-needy private school students attending private schools which have very little accountability. My School District, Brecksville Broadview Heights, like so many other school districts across the state, will be harmed.

Between 2023, when vouchers were dramatically expanded, voucher use by non-needy families in Brecksville Broadview Heights has increased in number from 1 to 402. Student enrollment over this same time frame has decreased by 65. As you can see, the vouchers are being used by students from non-needy families already attending private or charter schools.

Another grave concern is HB96's last minute addition of a requirement to cap public school district's cash balances to less than 30%. While there are dozens of problems this provision will cause, I will identify a few that are particularly worrisome. An ongoing challenge caused by the 30% threshold is that it will limit the revenue benefit from a new levy, thereby interfering with a typical levy cycle and likely result in forcing school districts to put levies on the ballot more frequently. Ironically, therefore, the stated goal of the measure - property tax relief - will be very temporary.

There also is no way for School Districts to revisit determinations more than annually. Therefore, a District's ability to address unanticipated mid-year events, such as tax delinquencies, failed levies, or board of revision cases, will be seriously curbed and could harm a District's ability to plan ahead, even for the next school year.

The proposed Carryover Cap is a very significant change to our current system and really needs a more thorough analysis before becoming law.

Thank you for considering and for the time you devote to our State.