

Testimony of Michayla Browning
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Submitted to the Ohio Senate Education Committee
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Good morning, Chairman Brenner and members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee. My name is Michayla Browning, and I am a sophomore at Shawnee High School in Lima. I offer my testimony in favor of expanding access to school lunches in Ohio.

I strongly encourage this committee to adopt Governor DeWine's proposed budget language aimed at enabling more schools with high concentrations of low-income families to participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision. This program ensures that all students in eligible schools receive free meals, eliminating the need for applications and reducing stigma. Although many schools have already enrolled, hundreds more are unable to cover the remaining costs, despite the significant federal funding that participation would bring.

Additionally, I encourage you to create a dedicated state fund to help bridge this cost gap. A modest investment – just a fraction of what universal meals would cost – could extend free meals to a multitude of students and reduce meal debt in schools across the state.

Thank you for considering this vital step toward ensuring all students have the nutrition they need to succeed.

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