

Senate Education Committee

House Bill 96

May 14, 2025

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to House Bill 96.

My name is Angela Rosenberg, and I am a born and raised Ohioan. Educated: Eight years of Catholic grade school, four years of Public High School, and receiving my bachelor's degree from a distinguished Ohio public university. My ancestors were immigrants from Italy, who settled in Ohio, looking for a better life and better opportunity. I love being an Ohioan and I have chosen to raise my family here. My school choice is public education.

I have four children. My third is graduating from high school this year and my baby will graduate next. That is 18 years of public education, and I have had firsthand experiences of the ups and downs the General Assembly has presented to my school district. I am a member of my citizens committee to help educate my community when an operating levy needs to be on the ballot and I can talk about the PIF and bond levy issues until the cows come home. I sit on our Finance committee and have had the experience of witnessing the OBM tell my treasurer that our school district needed to drain our bank account and then 'make more money'. I am educated on the limitations of HB 920, and I am also educated on how my school district is a good steward of my community's tax dollars. I have been told that we need to run our school district like a business and, we do. Recently I have researched how much money the state gives my public school for my children and how much the state has decided to give the private school family of the same economic means. If you are curious, the private school family receives more state tax dollars. I am appalled and embarrassed that my wonderful state now ranks 30<sup>th</sup> in education when in 2003, it ranked fifth!

I had hope that the General Assembly would be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, like my school district, and fund our 608 school districts properly with the bipartisan passage of the Cupp-Patterson bill. The state went through instituting two phases and when it came time to initiate the final phase, this General Assembly decided that it was too expensive to fund the final phase fully. Instead, they would increase private school vouchers (which

gives more state tax dollars to private schools than the public school kids) and debate the passage of HB 96. Please keep in mind that 87% of Ohio kids attend Ohio public schools.

So how does HB 96 affect my school district and my community. Our public school district is a pillar of my wonderful community. Majority of the kids attend the school district for education. Ohio collects property taxes in arrears, which means that any reduction triggered by a June 30<sup>th</sup> balance wouldn't affect collections until 18 months later. By that point, the fiscal budget year would have been already adopted. Programming for the students (traditional and unique needs), maintaining proper bus numbers to transport the students, planning for cafeteria needs, all the while maintaining proper staffing will all be negatively impacted without the ability to forecast and maintain present day levy cycles. Our last levy lasted 12 years and our new one took effect in 2023. If HB96 passes, we will need to go back to the voters every year or two to ask for new money. We will be at the mercy of it passing every time or altering our budgets with each failure. It will continue to make it hard to staff classrooms and create the programs that are needed for all the students to succeed in the classroom and real world. I am all for fiscal conservativeness and supporting property tax relief, but this bill does neither. I am very proud of our districts AAA rating and financial stability and this bill damages both those items. As a business owner, I can see that HB96 is a bad business proposition. It will have long-term damaging effects on the children of our community and our community itself. Our community takes pride in making sure all our young residents are educated and ready to succeed in this world. HB96 creates one more layer that makes it difficult to achieve that goal.

HB920 restricted property tax levies for education. The discontinuing of the TPP, removed millions of dollars from our budget. Now HB96 wants to limit our ability to be fiscally responsible, manage our levy cycles, avoid frequent ballot issues, navigate cash flow gaps due to the timing of tax collections and state payments, sustain capital, maintenance or strategic plans and finally lose our districts bond rating and financial stability. Please remove the 30% cash provision from HB96 and if you are really interested in providing property tax relief, then please fully fund our school districts at the state level and create a commission that will study, evaluate and debate the best way to provide the tax relief you seek.