

Good morning, esteemed members of the House, Senate, and everyone gathered here today.

My name is Owen Partin and I am a freshman at Belmont High School - A Dayton Public School. I'm here to speak about a pressing issue that impacts not only our students but also the future of our community. I would like to focus on the detrimental effects that the lack of funding would have for our school sports programs. According to the Dayton Daily News "Dayton Public Schools, ended fiscal year 2024 with nearly \$139.2 million cash on hand, equivalent to roughly 58.2% of its budget, according to the LSC. The district would have to lower that amount by more than \$67 million under the budget proposal."

Ladies and gentlemen - Sports are far more than just games. They provide our students with essential life skills - like discipline, teamwork, resilience, and leadership. They offer a safe space for students to stay active, build friendships, and develop self-confidence. Yet, due to insufficient funding, many of these programs would be cut or severely limited, leaving our students without these invaluable opportunities.

The reality is that many of our schools are already struggling to provide the necessary equipment, uniforms, and coaching staff. From when i played football at wogamen middle school we had over 26 players while only having 18 helmets. Without these resources, students would not be able to compete at their best or even participate in some cases. For those who rely on sports as an outlet - like myself - whether to avoid negative influences or to work toward college scholarships - the lack of funding can mean the difference between success and missed opportunities.

Ladies and gentlemen - We know that sports programs don't just build athletes; they build better citizens. They teach the importance of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. But without the proper financial support, we are depriving our students of these lessons.

I urge you to prioritize school funding for our district - to allow sports programs to continue in our schools. After all, our students deserve better opportunities, better resources, and a better future.

Thank you.