



Senator Andrew O. Brenner – 19th District
Senate Education Committee
March 3rd, 2026
Senate Concurrent Resolution 16 – Sponsor Testimony

Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution 16.

Let's be clear about what this resolution does. It calls on Congress to dismantle the United States Department of Education and return authority over education to the states, local communities, and families where it constitutionally belongs.

Education is not enumerated in the United States Constitution. Not once. For nearly two centuries, states educated their children without a federal department directing policy from Washington. The Department of Education was created in 1979. Since then, federal spending has exploded. Federal rules have multiplied. Federal compliance burdens have grown more intrusive and more expensive.

And yet, outcomes have stagnated. If centralization were the answer, we would already see the results. Instead, we see flat literacy rates, stagnant math proficiency, and declining international competitiveness. More bureaucracy has not produced better outcomes. It has produced more paperwork.

Federal programs come with strings. Those strings become mandates. Those mandates become compliance offices. And compliance offices become permanent overhead, pulling dollars and time away from classrooms and into administration. Smaller and rural districts feel this burden the most. We are told that without a federal department, civil rights protections would disappear. That is simply not true. Civil rights laws predate the modern Department of Education. Enforcement authority can exist without maintaining a sprawling cabinet-level bureaucracy.

We are told that without Washington, states will fail their students. That argument ignores reality. States already set curriculum standards. States license teachers. States oversee accountability systems. States manage the vast majority of education funding. Ohio educates Ohio's children, not Washington. What the federal government has mastered is conditional funding and regulatory leverage. What it has not mastered is raising student achievement.

National education policy does not account for the regional, cultural, and economic differences across this country. What works in rural Ohio is not what works in Manhattan. What works in Appalachia is not what works in Los Angeles. Local control is not a slogan; it is a structural necessity. This resolution is not radical. It is constitutional. Returning authority to the states restores federalism. It restores accountability closer to families. And it restores flexibility for innovation that centralized systems inherently suppress.

If fifty years of federal oversight have not delivered transformative results, it is reasonable, and responsible, to reconsider the structure. The question before us is simple: Do we believe that the people of Ohio are capable of governing their own education system? I do. And that is why I ask for your support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 16. Thank you. I welcome your questions.