

Senate Finance Committee  
House Bill 96  
May 22, 2025

To Chair Jerry Cirino and Senate Finance Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 96. My name is Rebecca Johnson; I live at 191 Compton Road in Wyoming, Ohio. I am a Xavier University history professor; my husband Steven Johnson is a physician at TriHealth, Inc.

We live in the Wyoming City Schools district, and our two children went through its public school system, K-12. This district's tax base is 96% residential; families – not industries – bear the burden of funding its schools. We ALWAYS pass our operating levies and bond levies and our income tax levies. We are proud to support an excellent school district like Wyoming. Our son is a lawyer and our daughter is a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, thanks in large part to a good Ohio public education.

But we must have state funding to continue to be excellent! We have received \$5.9 million annually from the state since around 2019. And our district has relied on the promise of the Fair School Funding Plan, which is transparent, student centered, and PREDICTABLE. It was a good plan and, shockingly, bipartisan! Why it is not being followed now is beyond our comprehension.

And the Cost Balance Cap? All that does is punish a school district for PLANNING AHEAD. Furthermore, it actually negates the public's vote. If we say we want our schools to have a certain amount of money, and we vote for that, and this cost balance cap takes it away, the budget is unconstitutional because it has not respected the will of the voters.

Please, for the sake of the 90% of Ohio children who are educated in public schools, do not pass the House bill as it is written. When 500 out of the 600 school districts in Ohio will be hobbled and punished and starved for funds because of a state budget, almost all of Ohio children are hurt. I cannot imagine you would want that for the children in your own district. I certainly don't want that for those in mine and am happy to pay the taxes to support them.

Sincerely,

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