

Testimony for HB 96
Senate Finance Committee
May 27, 2025

Chair Cirino and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony. I am here to oppose the language put in the H.B. 96 to reduce the State Board of Education from eleven elected and eight appointed members to five Governor appointees representing urban, rural, suburban, charter, and chartered non-public schools.

My name is Karen Lloyd representing District 8 on the State Board of Education (SBOE). I am a lifelong resident of Jefferson County, Ohio. I was raised in Mingo Junction and I currently reside in Steubenville. I'm a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a retired elementary school educator. I am a teacher that values education, values the Fair School Funding Plan, values quality educators and values my constitutional rights to elect my local AND State Board of Education.

Last November, I was elected, with over 307,000 votes, to serve as District 8 SBOE representing over one million Ohio citizens. I don't consider myself a politician, just continuing my public service beyond my 36 years as a public school teacher. Never... ever.. did I imagine I would find my name on a ballot or give testimony before all of you today. I am here because of my deep passion to

support local school districts and increase our pool of highly qualified teachers to educate more than 1.8 million children in Ohio.

My representation is important. It matters for my local public school districts when it comes to delivering the best public education possible. It mattered in 1953, when voters approved establishing an independent Board of Education and it matters even more today.

Prior to 1953 citizens experienced public education controlled by the Governor through a cabinet position. This style of school governance did not work equally for all of Ohio Schools. They understood the importance of having more local, not centralized, representation at the state level.

It seems 'By the People' has been forgotten today to consolidate power and again place all education issues under the Governor's control. Article VI, Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution has over 70 years of established law underpinning Ohio's rule of being a local control state. By supporting the House budget, and stripping the independent State Board of Education of its elected members, we ignore the will of the people. This budget changes MY constitutional right and neither I, nor my fellow Ohioans gave permission to do so.

I believe it's historically important to understand how the board was originally created from the 1953 constitutional amendment.

In 1955, the legislature was given the roadmap to establish the composition of the State Board of Education and its duties and responsibilities. The reasons that the State Educational Organization Committee gave in 1955 still hold the same truths today.

Back in 1954, the general assembly took this task seriously, forming a School Survey Committee to survey, analyze, and make recommendations in the form of a report through the “efforts of hundreds, even thousands of people” ([Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#), 1955, Page vii).

One of the first items to be addressed by the committee was the “consideration of the composition and organization of the new board. In order to ascertain the sentiment of the people of the state, a pamphlet was distributed to organizations throughout the state summarizing the arguments for and against various proposals and asking for a report of the group’s opinion on each proposal. Replies were received from almost 600 groups representing in the aggregate several thousand citizens throughout the state. In addition, reports were

returned by almost 100 individuals.” ([Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#), 1955, Page 61).

The committee members, including state representatives and senators, listened to the citizens, to formulate a plan to implement the amendment. It's very important to know what the study committee heard from the citizens about the composition of the new State Board of Education. “The study committee, after a careful consideration of the merits and disadvantages of all plans, chose the elective system with nomination by petition, for the following reasons:

- It believed that an elected board would more directly represent the will for the people than would an appointive board. The constitutional amendment provides that the state superintendent of public instruction be appointed by the state board of education. **The appointment of both board and superintendent would remove the control of schools too far from the people.**
- It believed an appointed board could be controlled, or at least partially controlled, by the appointing authority. This would create serious problems if the appointing authority were politically minded or dominated by a particular pressure group.” ([Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#), 1955, Page 62)

Article 1, Section 2, of the Ohio Constitution explicitly states that all political power is inherent in the people.

Therefore, as a citizen and registered Ohio voter, I respectfully request that you uphold your oath as a member of the Ohio Senate to honor the voice of the people and defend the Ohio Constitution by retaining the elected members of the State Board of Education.

Thank you.

Karen Lloyd