

Testimony for House Bill 96
Senate Finance Committee
May 28, 2025

Chair Jerry Cirino, Vice Chair Brian Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio Senate, thank you for considering my written testimony.

My name is Barbara Wallin. I am a Cincinnati resident and a parent of a school-aged child who attends Cincinnati Public Schools.

I call upon the Ohio Senate to reinstate the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP) in the Ohio Biennium Budget for FY2026 and FY2027. It is the Ohio legislature's constitutional responsibility to fairly fund a high-quality system of public schools, available to all students.

As House Bill 96 stands now, the public school of Ohio would be allocated **\$226 million**. This is inefficient. With the current rate of inflation, public schools need to be fully funded closer to **\$800 million**.

For Cincinnati Public Schools, this would mean **\$1,626,609** over the next 2 years. What is actually needed is **\$40,773,913!**

House Budget Bill 96 drains public funds from public schools by scrapping the fair school funding formula before it's full implementation. It limits a school district's ability to carry over funds. This is going to leave homeowners throughout the state footing the remaining costs for their local schools through their property taxes. The under-funding of our public schools has been ruled unconstitutional (*DeRolph v. State*). This is unacceptable.

Abandoning the FSFP, a **bipartisan** approach to school funding based on the actual cost of adequately educating our students. It takes into consideration communities' ability to cover the costs through local taxation. HB96 underfunds public schools by millions if not billions of dollars.

Supporting public schools ***should not be a partisan issue***. Ninety percent of K-12 students attend public schools. All students in the state of Ohio deserve schools that are properly and constitutionally funded.

I urge you today to fully implement and fund the FSFP using up-to-date estimates that adjust the formula's base cost inputs to account for rising costs of goods and services. I further urge you to eliminate the cap on carryover funds.

It is past time for the legislature to do the right thing: Please consider the millions of Ohio students, like mine, who attend and depend upon their public schools.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wallin
Parent of a Cincinnati Public School Student
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