

To the Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding House Bill 96 and the continuation—and critical expansion—of the 5th Quarter Grant funding that supports year-round Agricultural Education in Ohio.

My name is Ellyse Simpson, and I have just completed my sixth year as an Agricultural Education teacher and FFA advisor at Southeastern Local Schools. Like many of my colleagues across the state, I teach in a comprehensive Ag Ed program that follows the nationally recognized **three-circle model**—classroom/laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs), and FFA leadership development. For this model to work as intended and reach its full potential, **year-round engagement is essential**.

Agricultural education doesn't stop when the final bell rings in May. Over the summer months, I continue to:

- Supervise student projects in livestock, crop production, agribusiness, and environmental systems.
- Coordinate community partnerships and job shadowing placements.
- Prepare students for Career Development Events and leadership opportunities.
- Host SAE visits, county fair preparation, and chapter officer training.
- Maintain school-based enterprises and land labs that directly serve both our students and local community.

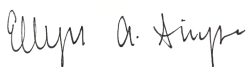
These are not optional "extra" activities—they are **essential** components of a fully functioning Ag Ed program and are integral to student success. Yet, much of this work is done **outside of my contracted hours**, and the current funding does not adequately compensate for the additional time, responsibilities, and impact.

By increasing the 5th Quarter Grant funding, you invest directly in:

- **Student achievement and career readiness.**
- **Workforce development** in agriculture and related industries.
- **Educator retention and sustainability** in rural and urban districts alike.

Supporting year-round agriculture education through adequate funding ensures that Ohio continues to lead the nation in developing well-prepared, civic-minded, and career-focused young people. I respectfully request that you vote to increase the 5th Quarter Grant allocation in House Bill 96 to **\$1.2 million over the next two fiscal years**. Our students, communities, and state economy will be stronger because of it. Thank you for your time and for your continued support of Agricultural Education in Ohio.

Sincerely,



Ellyse Simpson

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