

Senate Finance Committee
HB 96 Testimony
Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Chairman Cirino, Ranking member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Teresa Fedor. I am a member of the Ohio State Board of Education, District 2 covering seven counties. Previous to this position, I served 22 years in the legislature, both in the House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate. I also had the privilege of teaching in the classroom 18 years after serving in the United States Air Force and Ohio Air National Guard.

I am here to oppose HB 96 budget language removing the 11 elected members from the State Board of Education (SBOE) and replacing them with Governor appointees. Article VI, Section 4 of the Ohio Constitution will be legislated away keeping the language in the budget. A Governor appointing the State Board of Education will dismantle the voters' intent to protect public education from partisan control and influence.

Please protect and keep the voters' constitutional right to elect SBOE representatives to be the voice of the people in shaping state education policy for their local public schools. Although our duties are limited, we are still attending district education events, meetings and celebrations and are available to help assist issues needing attention.

Constitutionally, the SBOE is an independent body created to represent local school districts on public education matters. The legislature was given the roadmap to establish the composition of the State Board of Education and its duties and responsibilities. See [Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#). More than 70 committee members, including state representatives and senators listened to 600 groups representing in the aggregate several thousands of citizens on all plans to implement the amendment. ([Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#), 1955, Page 61).

Regarding SBOE composition, the study committee recommended the elective system over the appointed system. It believed that an elected board would more directly represent the will for the people than would an appointed board. The appointment of both board and superintendent would remove the control of schools too far from the people. ([Report of the Ohio School Survey Committee](#), 1955, Page 62)

More reasons for establishing the state board of education in Ohio's constitution can be found in the book, "[MILESTONES: A History of the State Board of Education 1956-1986](#)".

As stated earlier, the 11 elected SBOE members are attending education related meetings and events in their respective districts, including ESC Superintendent meetings, professional conferences and district LPDC meetings. We have been ambassadors or liaisons for education issues not only with our board responsibilities, but partnering with the Department of Education and Workforce when there are issues related to their work.

Ohio benefits from direct representation on SBOE. They help facilitate issues specific to education and help clear the way for expediting matters for individuals and local school districts. For example, teacher licensure issues have come up on numerous occasions. Just last week, I met an individual working full time with two degrees and had questions about getting started with the paperwork to be a fully licensed teacher. Another example, I assisted a charter school in addressing the need to hire foreign language teachers and out of state reciprocity. Through that experience the Board simplified the administrative process and improved the website.

Currently, the SBOE has 295 years of collective experience working in education as teachers, administrators and education policy. The board takes seriously its duty to ensure well qualified educators are serving Ohio's 1.6 million students. We have improved or recommended changes that have plagued the SBOE in the past. Improvements include:

- Working to address a long-standing backlog of professional conduct cases.
- Working to increase the educator pipeline, including expanded 'second chance' opportunities and the interim educator licenses for educators as well as working to quickly meet the needs of licensing teachers for a new school year.
- Working to improve communications to the field regarding licensure and professional conduct expectations. Currently, we are doing a deep dive into the non-teaching licenses where we see a recurring issue to address, i.e. lack of training for proper professional and moral behaviors.

Voters know the importance of having more local, not centralized, representation at the state level. They want more of a voice on education issues, not less. It is even more important today to have direct voter representation on our State Board of Education. For these reasons, I respectfully ask that the current HB 96 remove the language that says the 11 elected members will be eliminated from the State Board of Education (SBOE) and replaced with Governor appointees.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.