

Testimony of Delores Gray Ford

Member, State Board of Education, District 11

June 3, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice-Chair Chavez, & Members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Good morning, Finance Committee Members,

Allow me to introduce myself, I am Delores Gray Ford, a duly elected member of the State Board of Education, for the 11th district. It is a privilege to serve the constituents of this district, including our children, their families, and our resolute educators. Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony today; your time is greatly appreciated. As a mother, grandmother, educator, literacy developer, and community leader, I hold a strong belief in our educators, communities, students, and the State Board of Education. I recognize the significant work we are undertaking to ensure that qualified professionals are educating our children, and as this is my first year, I am enthusiastic about our future for collaboration and partnership to facilitate improvements where necessary.

With over two decades of experience as an educator, social and community health worker, coupled with my extensive work in education, literacy, advocacy, and community wellness, I have developed a direct understanding of the challenges confronting Ohio's students, educators, and families as a result of systemic inequities within our education system. My aspiration is for all children in Ohio to achieve excellence and for our educators, to be qualified leaders, who are dedicated to encouraging our children to achieve greatness and be a positive role model for the next generation of leaders.,

As you are aware, my district includes a diverse array of urban, suburban, and rural communities. Through my ongoing engagement and dialogue with leaders, educators, students, and community stakeholders throughout the 11th district, a consistent sentiment has been conveyed: the desire and necessity for a committed advocate to represent their children, students and educators. During the first half of 2025, I attentively addressed the concerns of my constituents and aided with educational inquiries and any issues that have arisen and will continue so throughout my term.

My work has included speaking at middle and high school graduations to encourage students to pursue their education, traveling to Medina, Wayne and Ashland counties attending Town Hall meetings, and planning to address students at Ashland College this fall, in addition I will be organizing educational forums across the 11th district, informing our constituents about the valuable work we are doing at the State Board. I consider my role to be that of an ambassador for education, and it is essential to maintain visibility and accountability to our constituents, the voters who elected the eleven officials to represent them.

The future of Ohio's children rests with us. As Ambassadors of education, we are committed to all children and educators, looking forward to working together here in Ohio. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Member Delores Gray Ford

State Board of Education, 11th District.