

**Interested Party Testimony for House Bill [96]  
[Senate / House] [Education/Finance] Committee  
June 6, 2025**

**Janet Albright-Captain, Certified Teacher**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio Senate:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Janet Albright-Captain, and I am a certified special education teacher at Rothenberg Preparatory Academy in Cincinnati, Ohio. I have dedicated my career to supporting students who rely on the resources and opportunities that only a fully funded public school can provide. But this issue is also deeply personal to me, not just as an educator, but as a grandmother to children currently attending Ohio's public schools.

I am submitting this testimony as an Interested Party to express my concern about several provisions in House Bill 96—specifically, the *Reductions in State Formula Funding*, *Caps on District Cash Reserves*, and the *Expansion of Private School Vouchers*. These sections threaten to undermine the future of our students and communities. I strongly support fully funding Ohio's public schools and urge lawmakers to invest in the success of every child, not just a select few.

At Rothenberg Preparatory Academy, we are already seeing the consequences of limited and uncertain funding, and it's only getting worse. Next school year, we are losing two paraprofessionals and our math specialist, key staff who provide vital support to students who struggle most. Our physical education position is being reduced from full-time to part-time, joining our already part-time art and music teachers. These educators play essential roles in helping students grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Their absence means fewer learning opportunities, more student behavior issues, and increased pressure on already overextended staff.

As a special education teacher, my projected caseload for next year will exceed the state-recommended maximum. This not only affects my ability to give each student the time and attention they deserve, but also raises compliance concerns and heightens the risk of burnout. Meanwhile, with the district trying to manage a strained budget, hiring freezes and potential RIFs are frequent topics at school board meetings. Even more concerning, under HB 96's *Caps on District Cash Reserves*, any contingency funds we've saved for emergencies could be forced back to taxpayers, leaving us without resources to respond to unexpected major repairs.

These provisions hurt students, educators, and families, including my grandchildren in Ohio's public schools.

The impact of HB 96 isn't just numbers on a spreadsheet—it's personal. I live in the same neighborhood where I teach, so when our school loses vital staff or programs, it doesn't just affect my students—it affects my neighbors, my family, and the children I've watched grow up. Our school is more than a building; it's a safe place, a support system, a second home for so many kids who rely on it for more than just academics.

As a Black educator, parent, and grandparent, I see how these cuts fall hardest on African American students and families who are already working against systemic barriers. Stripping funding from public schools while expanding private voucher programs sends a clear message about who is valued—and who is left behind. My heart breaks thinking about the missed opportunities, the teachers who won't be there, the programs that will disappear.

We all want what's best for our kids—to see them dream big, feel seen, and reach their potential. But without real investment in public education, that future slips further away. This bill doesn't just hurt schools—it hurts communities like mine that depend on them to survive and thrive.

I am testifying today because I believe every child, regardless of their zip code, race, or family income, deserves a fully funded public education. The students I teach, the grandchildren I love, and the families in my neighborhood will all feel the weight of the decisions made in this bill. House Bill 96, as written, would take critical resources away from the schools and educators who need them most.

Please consider my testimony and the real lives behind the policies you are shaping. Reevaluate the sections of HB 96 that reduce state formula funding, cap district reserves, and expand private school vouchers at the expense of public schools. Our children deserve better.

Thank you for your time and for giving me the opportunity to speak up on behalf of the students, families, and communities who often go unheard.

Janet Albright-Captain