

HOUSE Bill 138- SPONSOR TESTIMONY

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79th Ohio House District

Education Committee

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Chairman Hayes, Vice-Chair Brenner, Ranking member Fedor, House Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today regarding House Bill 138 sponsored by myself and Representative Paul Zeltwanger.

House Bill 138 is a very simple bill that can make a huge impact. We have an issue in Ohio schools today. One that very few of us are responsible for, but that all of us have a responsibility to fix. In 2010, the ODE decided to adopt and implement assessments using the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (or PARCC) tests.

I wasn't here for that and as far as I can tell, the State Legislature at the time had no say in what was selected or implemented. But the parents, students, teachers, and administrators that we each represent are living and struggling with the fallout from that unfortunate decision.

While I had heard complaints about over-testing before I took office, it wasn't until I took my oath to represent Ohioans here that I started getting email after email complaining about the PARCC testing. They are not "form letter" emails, but personal pleas from parents, teachers, school counselors, and administrators. Earlier this session, I had Jamie Boysel, a school counselor and test administrator; testify in this room on House Bill 74. She explained how student after student has been negatively affected by weeks of testing. With her permission, I posted her testimony on Social Media. More than 1,600 responses on PARCC testing poured in; each was consistent with Ms. Boysel's experience.

The comments I received complained of students not being taught; students having anxiety attacks leading to vomiting both at home and at school and; teachers and counselors who spend the entirety of their time preparing and administering tests over an eight week period. Think about this: We are taking eight weeks (almost an entire quarter of the school year) to see if students are learning something in the other three-quarters of the school year. I can't imagine what would happen if I stood before you today and suggested that students could afford 8 weeks of calamity days (40 days) and still have time to learn everything they need to learn in a typical school year.

To you, my colleagues, I say we have an emergency that we must address now. There is a destructive fire burning in our schools and we need to rescue the children inside. You and I are not laying blame for whoever started the fire. This bill does not try to dictate what the next course of action is. The bill doesn't even attempt to put out the fire. This bill is our attempt to rescue the students, teachers, and administrators that are trapped inside the walls. As legislators we have the ability to rescue these children and we must. We cannot allow our children, teachers, and school districts to suffer while the slow-moving state policy-makers try to come up with a better system that could take years to devise.

HB 138 is our attempt to rescue these folks for the current school year by doing TWO simple things.

- 1) If ODE selects PARCC, then schools will be required to administer only the performance-based portion and are not required to administer the EOY portion. (They can however choose to if they want).
- 2) Results from EOY portion of PARCC shall not be used for:
 - a) Calculating report card ratings (or measures used to compile a report card)
 - b) Evaluation of teachers and administrators
 - c) Retention of third-grade students (reading guarantee)
 - d) Determining eligibility of high school graduation

House Bill 138 carries with it an emergency clause because we need this in effect immediately upon the Governor's signature.

I am well aware that some school districts are already administering these tests. But there are still several weeks that can be salvaged for something other than meaningless testing. Students in the schools need our help. They need us to rescue them. We, as legislators, cannot stand on the curb and not take action.

Our students are being under-educated and over-tested. We need to get schools back to teaching and students back to learning. We need to put a pause on PARCC for this school year, and come up with a better solution for our students and teachers.

Chairman Hayes, Vice-Chair Brenner, Ranking member Fedor, my colleagues – thank you for allowing me to testify here this morning. I will be happy to take questions regarding House Bill 138.