

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Kindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Beverly Dorson and I am submitting written testimony (on behalf of the Hudson League of Women Voters) in support of Senate Bill 298, a bill that would add much needed accountability measures in our online schools.

LWV Hudson position on our Hudson City public schools “ supports adequate funding and fiscal management that maintain or improve education programming and opportunities for all public school students in the Hudson City School District.” This position was reached after a lengthy and thorough study of our local public schools in 2013.

LWVO supports a funding system for public elementary and secondary education that is accountable and responsive to the taxpayers. LWVO believes that public funds should be used only for public schools that accept all students in their districts. I believe that public schools are those that have elected school boards and are accountable and responsible to their taxpayers. Since the charter schools have appointed boards that are not responsive or accountable to the public, and management companies like White Hat can take public funds and then keep what they buy after the school closes.

I also believe that all charter online schools should have to follow all state requirements that public schools with elected boards are mandated to follow, including audits of their books and attendance records.

The average online student costs a school district \$6,893. At this rate, online providers have plenty of money to monitor student attendance/engagement in the learning process or in other words, be more accountable and transparent. Hudson City School District receives about \$2400 per pupil and Woodridge Local schools get \$600 per pupil from the state. Our taxpayers should not have to support failing or inadequate charter schools and then make up the difference of withheld state aid with more levies. To me, this is taxation for charters without representation of elected and accountable board members. Local school districts are losing about \$250 million to ECOT, Ohio Virtual Academy and a bevy of other online charters this year.

In conclusion, I believe it is of utmost importance for the passage of SB 298. Taxpayers need the assurance that students are being educated in eSchools. If tax dollars are being used, the eSchools need to be as accountable and transparent as brick and mortar schools are required to be by our state government.

Chairman Oelslager and members of the committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at my email address: dorsonb@gmail.com

Thank you for considering my written testimony,
Beverly A. Dorson
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