

June 13, 2017

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB181.

My name is Beth Lear and I helped Reps Hood and Brinkman craft this bill along with many others whose education experience includes teaching, drafting legislation and formulating public policy. I have been working on education issues since I was hired as an aide in the Ohio House in 1993. In 2006 I was asked to work for a public policy organization as their Education Policy Analyst and have been focused primarily on education issues in the public and private sector ever since.

As you have heard, this bill was designed to address several key issues and be a complete system change using best practices. Teachers, administrators, parents and students are understandably weary of the constant changes to our education system. Yes, this bill brings changes – in fact we believe it is a foundational change - but not more experimental, top-down, micromanagement from the federal and state levels. The Student Teacher Liberty Act was created to free teachers and students from the shackles of the one-size-fits-all government plan and to allow, once again, creativity in classrooms and hopefully restore the joy of both teaching and learning. In a nutshell, this is why we believe these lofty goals are attainable:

- It ends excessive testing.
 - HB 181 replaces testing season with testing day. The move away from criterion referenced tests means no more constantly changing cut scores or results arriving too late to be useful. Utilizing pre-common core norm-referenced tests as the statewide assessment also means fewer tests because of no end-of-course exams and the elimination of the fall 3rd grade reading test. And, with the standards derived from a norm-referenced battery of assessments that is broadly outlined, it will allow local districts to choose the curriculum that best fits their students. No more teaching to the test. And we're particularly grateful that the State School Board testing subcommittee appears to be thinking the same way. Any additional changes they'd like to make in limiting testing is a welcome discussion and HB 181 would be an excellent vehicle for those additional changes.
- It does not jeopardize federal funding.
 - HB 181 meets the federal requirement to have standards that match one statewide assessment. This ensures that we do not risk the loss of our federal funds. If we have more than one type of statewide assessment or the standards and assessments do not match, we could lose up to 8% or more of our education funding at each and every school district across Ohio. Since Ohio sends money to the federal government and since every district would be forced come up

with an additional 8% just to maintain what they are currently offering, those of us who worked on House Bill 181 felt it was too much to ask of taxpayers to fork over another 8% and many would not. Nevertheless, changing to the norm-referenced system with standards based upon the test chosen protects our federal funds while still allowing us more flexibility locally to design curriculum that works for each school's students.

- No more state-managed teacher and principal evaluations.
 - HB 181 uses the flexibility granted in ESSA to eliminate state mandated and state micromanaged evaluations of teachers and principals, replacing them with evaluations conducted by local districts who understand that teachers, like students, cannot be adequately evaluated with a one-size-fits-all program. Eliminating state evaluations should increase teacher focus on students and hopefully improve morale and relationships between administrators and teachers.
- Protection for student data.
 - HB 181 provides much needed safety measures to protect student information. We believe this language is the most thorough and forward thinking in the nation, and designed it to provide protection even with many of the not-yet-widely-used technologies like virtual reality.
- Common Core State Standards are eliminated and prohibited.
 - The current standards are just common core state standards (CCSS) under a different name. As you've heard from one student today, these so-called standards are complicated, not parent- or student-friendly, take creativity out of the classroom and force teachers to teach to a test instead of inspiring the next generation to love learning. CCSS are experimental, and the experiment is not going well. Our children deserve so much better. It is not our job to provide Bill Gates and his friends with "customers for life", which he claimed Microsoft would get as a result of the federal mandate for the CCSS standards and aligned tests.

Thank you for allowing us to present the details of HB 181 – the Student Teacher Liberty Act – to you this afternoon. It was named the "Liberty" Act because it literally frees students and teachers from the failing, top-down, one-size-fits-all system that neither inspires life-long learning nor encourages creativity. Let our teachers teach. Let our students learn. Please vote to support HB 181 and ask your fellow Republicans and Democrats to do the same. Our education system should be about what's best for students, and HB 181 gives power back to parents, local boards, administrators and teachers to meet the needs of each and every INDIVIDUAL child for whom they are responsible.

Thank you very much for your time today. My colleagues and I are happy to answer any questions.