



Canton Professional Educators' Association

**1327 Market Avenue, N.
Canton, Ohio 44714**

Chair Lehner and Members of the Committee,

This testimony is in support of House Bill 154. The community of Canton, Ohio and Stark County fully stand behind the House version of this bill, as currently written. All community stakeholders appreciate the opportunity this legislation provides to retain local control of school districts. The opportunity to craft a district specific improvement plan is one that is not taken lightly. Local control ensures all stakeholders have a place at the table and a voice in the process. In the city of Canton, specifically, we have great economic upturn within our grasp. Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village, Centennial Plaza, and a revitalized downtown area with a thriving Arts District are three premier examples of current and future economic development.

Current legislation, in the form of House Bill 70, poses an imminent and direct threat to these initiatives. The school system is an engine for workforce development; HB 70 threatens workforce development and, in turn, the growth of students and Canton as a whole. House Bill 70 has been an abysmal failure. This legislation is divisive, does not foster trust, and promotes negative perceptions of our great community. Academic Distress Commissions (ADCs), as a result of House Bill 70, create conditions that are not best for students. State takeovers ignore the premise that solutions to strengthening academic achievement fall upon the shoulders of vested stakeholders. It is not controversial to say there is a better alternative to House Bill 70.

House Bill 154 is the common sense solution. It has passed 83-12 in the House of Representatives. The bill provides opportunity for local stakeholders to marshal resources, creating a plan that provides best practices going forward. Those at the state level, in conjunction with local leaders, must work together as one team with one goal as outlined in House Bill 154. This legislation is the starting point to address root causes of many educational issues including an ambiguous state report card and fluctuating graduation requirements.

Research shows that complex problems require complex solutions. Local control is a part of that solution. Those who have signed this letter show their support for House Bill 154 as this legislation provides accountability while advocating for local control. House Bill 154 keeps the best interest of all stakeholders in mind, especially students of affected school districts. Join us in providing the best outcome for all students, citizens of Canton, and residents of Ohio. Thank you.

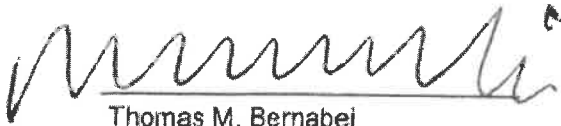
With my testimony you will find the names of supporters of this position who signed onto a letter expressing these same sentiments. I'd be happy to answer questions at this time.



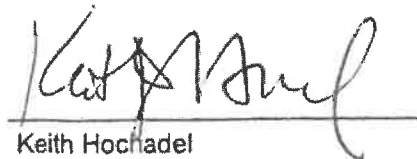
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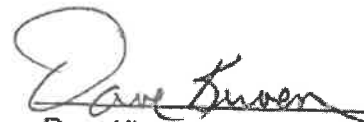
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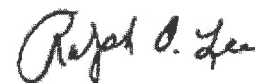
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