

Testimony of

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Resident of Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Before the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

Supporting SCR 14

June 9, 2020

Good Morning Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, and Ranking Member Antonio, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of SCR 14, introduced by Senator Williams and Craig.

I testify before you today as an educator, a mother to a black son and black daughters, as a wife, as a black woman and finally as a resident of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Cleveland Heights, Ohio a city with a statically diverse population, however, a city who failed to pass its most recent school levy. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights student population is majority Black.

It has been proven time and time again that using a system where school funding is determined by property taxes to be unconstitutional. Yet, public education in Ohio continues to be funded this way. This is an example of systemic racism being perpetuated through public education. Education being one of the fundamental components to public health.

Children in poorer cities receive less resources for their education compared to their counterparts in wealthier cities. It has been proven that children in high poverty cities actually need more resources. The poorest city in Ohio is majority Black.

It is time to stop denying the right to an equitable public education to poor Black children. It is time to stop denying the resources needed to educate poor Black children. It is time to take a stance on racism and acknowledge how it has been used to deny the Black community opportunity for centuries.

Education can be used as a vehicle to shift one's socio-economic position in life. However, if you are a Black child born into a high poverty zip code you must face many barriers and obstacles to make this shift. Lack of educational opportunity should not be one of those barriers.

Ohio's system of public education funding is a modern-day anti-literacy law. There was a time in America when it was unlawful for Blacks to read and write. Currently, in Ohio, it is deemed unconstitutional how poor Black children receive their funding for a public education.

Although most of my testimony can be seen as anecdotal there is plenty of research and statistics to support my claims. Racism is truly a public health crisis and currently a public health emergency.

Thank you for your consideration of this important measure. I urge the committee to support SCR 14.