



The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

**Substitute House Bill 67: Proponent Testimony
Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Tuesday, March 9, 2021**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the Committee:

My name is Scott DiMauro, President of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of our 121,000 members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Substitute House Bill 67. This bill seeks to ensure that end-of-course exams this school year do not present a barrier to graduation and provides some additional testing relief and flexibility. As time is of the essence for this bill to have impact, OEA urges swift passage of this bill as an emergency measure.

The major provisions of the bill include:

- Permit students to use course grades in lieu of test scores on end-of-course exams from the 2020-21 school year to satisfy conditions for a high school diploma
- Permit schools to grant a diploma this year to a senior student who is on track to graduate and for whom the principal, in consultation with teachers and counselors, determines the student has successfully completed high school curriculum or individualized education program
- Exempt schools from administering the state required American history end-of-course exam
- Extend testing windows later in the school year and requires deadline extensions related to assessments
- Require ODE to seek a waiver from federal accountability and school identification requirements
- Extend back the deadline for school district/building report cards to October 14

Originally, HB 67 would have required the Department of Education to seek a waiver of federal testing requirements. Educators and parents from across Ohio have emphatically stated that testing this Spring will be a needless distraction from teaching and learning in the classroom and the ability to meet students' needs. However, waiving the tests is not an avenue currently available to us. The recent announcement from the federal department of education that they would not grant a testing waiver was hugely disappointing. While it does not do everything we had initially hoped, the current version of HB 67 attempts to make the best of a bad situation and is worthy of your support.

From our perspective, the most important provisions of the bill are related to high school graduation. Even the most ardent supporters of testing have stated that test results this year should not be used punitively or to make high stakes decisions. For our high school students, their path to graduation has incredibly high stakes. Through no fault of their own, our students have had their learning disrupted. HB 67 would give our local educators the tools to evaluate a student's knowledge of material and readiness to graduate rather than relying on this year's test scores.



OEA also supports waiving the end-of-course exam in American History, one of the tests that Ohio requires that exceeds federal testing requirements, as well as additional flexibility in the testing windows and related deadlines. Again, it is important for this bill to pass quickly and go into effect immediately in order to have its desired impact.

Chair Brenner, this concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time and attention. I am available for your questions at this time.