

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Ed Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in strong support of HB 67. My name is Mandy Jablonski. I am the mother of a high school junior, and the wife of a Social Studies teacher, both at Elyria High School. I am also an advocate for children and teachers through various groups that I lead. My main concern for the past five years has been the graduation requirements and how they impact the roughly 400,000 students in high schools across Ohio each year. Through these various roles, I have heard from countless parents, teachers, and school board members who are very concerned about how the graduation test requirements will impact our students this year. Students and teachers have scrambled to adapt through late starts to the school year, ever-changing learning models, being in and out of quarantine, and the devastating toll that these unparalleled circumstances have had on the mental health of our children. It is also important to note that some kids have not set foot in a classroom in almost a year, and they may not even feel comfortable coming in to take tests now. Even though families were unsure of the consequences at the time, we still had 100 kids who did not come in to take the Fall third grade ELA test here in Elyria. And we still have roughly 40% of our students learning fully online (my son included). It would be unfair, and decidedly cruel, to tie state test scores to graduation this year, especially when nearly everyone else has been given a break from consequences for the 2020-2021 school year.

Though this year has been anything but typical for our kids, they have been learning and doing the best that they can. Giving them the opportunity to use their course grades for graduation points this year will go a long way in alleviating some of the stress they have been dealing with this past year. I also respectfully ask that you add the emergency clause back into the bill. Because there is language in the bill that will benefit our current seniors, this bill needs to go into effect immediately in order to help them before the end of their school year.

Please consider my testimony and vote YES on this important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Mandy Jablonski
Elyria, Ohio