

Senate Testimony – Spring 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony about the Fair School Funding Plan in HB110.

My name is Eve McPherson and my children attend the Cleveland Heights University Heights public schools. This written testimony expresses my support of the Fair School Funding Plan in HB 110.

I have many reasons for supporting this plan but I'll just focus on one example here that illustrates the inequity of the current public school funding formula.

To illustrate this point, I'd like the committee members to ponder the following question: why is my child worth less than other children?

The reason I ask this question is that currently the school funding formula deducts funding from our public school district, Cleveland Heights University Heights, and redirects that funding, largely to schools for Orthodox Jewish children in Cleveland Heights.

Because of this deduction funding, the students at these private religious schools get more state aid than public school students in our district. This is the case because in the Cleveland Heights University Heights district, the number of our enrolled students has not really changed, it's been stable at about 5,000, but enrollments at the private religious schools have greatly increased. 94 percent of these students *never* attended the public schools. And, because private school students are *guaranteed* a certain dollar amount in state aid, that means students at the public school students in Cleveland Heights University Heights receive less state dollars. The public school students are not guaranteed a certain amount. As of January 2020, CHUH district students received \$2167 each in state aid once deductions were made. Private school students were guaranteed between \$4650-6000 each, depending on grade level. All of these funds are deducted from the local budget.

Last year 7.2 million dollars was deducted from CHUH while we maintained the *same enrollment numbers*.

I can assure you, I am paying my equal tax share, so my child should be getting *at least* the same amount in state aid as the private school students in my district. The Ohio constitution promises my child access to a full and fairly funded education. Your job is to realize that constitutional mandate.

So, I return to the question: Why is my child worth less?

I hope the answer is that my child is not worth less. If that is the case, it is imperative that the senate give full consideration to and implement the measures of the Fair School Funding Act in HB110. These measures will address myriad problems that the state of Ohio has educationally, the specific issue I outline above is just one

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