



Testimony on the Fair School Funding Plan and House Bill 110 Senate

Primary and Secondary Education Committee

Thursday May 6, 2021

Prentiss Haney

Ohio Student Association

Good afternoon, Chair Brenner, ranking member Fedor and members of the committee.

My name is Prentiss Haney and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Student Association. The Ohio Student Association is a statewide grassroots organization led by young people and anchored by student-led chapters on college campuses across the state. OSA brings together young Ohioans from different backgrounds and with different experiences to imagine and fight for a better future.

Students across Ohio deserve better than what we've been offered. Young people have had to make extraordinary sacrifices and adaptations to trying to learn during the coronavirus pandemic. We have seen what is possible when we come together across race, place, and background to take care of each other. To show up for one another, to put the needs of our collective health and wellness at the forefront. It is time our legislature show up for our students.

Our school funding system has been broken for far too long. It's let down Ohio students for far too long because of its reliance on property taxes that disadvantage lower income students, rural students, and students of color. I grew up in Dayton Ohio and was a student in the Dayton public schools system. I remember how hard we had to fight as a community to get local levies passed because we didn't have enough to attend world class schools. My nephew will be joining kindergarten this year in Dayton. I don't want him to have to attend subpar schools because of a broken funding system that we have the power to change.

Ohio's future relies on the cultivation and development of well educated kids who can bring their brilliance, creativity and passion into Ohio's communities. Too many young people from many of our communities however, are looking for a way out, do not see a path for themselves in a state that does not care for them.

We have the opportunity to ensure every kid can get a world class education regardless of race, zip code or income right now. The Fair School Funding Plan is a well designed formula that takes equity and real costs of education into the equation. It will finally show Ohio students that we are serious about investing in their futures. That we will roll our sleeves up after a generation of unconstitutionally funded schools and do what it takes to provide a world class education to every child.