



**Representative Jon Cross**

Ohio's 83<sup>rd</sup> House District

**Representative Don Jones**

Ohio's 95<sup>th</sup> House District

**House Bill 82 Sponsor Testimony**

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, Representative Jones and I are proud to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 82, which would remove the state mandate that requires every Ohio high school junior to take the ACT test and make it voluntary, giving the students an option to opt-out with parental consent.

As we all know, students today have different planned career and education pathways, post-high school graduation, with some attending college and some entering the workforce, trades or continuing education that doesn't require this specific test. For those juniors planning to attend a 2 or 4 year degree program after high school, a growing number of higher education institutions are not even requiring the ACT as an admission requirement. Students who are currently required to take the test that wish to not take it may have additional mental health concerns over stress over the test.

In addition, the standards addressed in the ACT tests do not mirror the educational standards approved in Ohio and do not mirror the educational standards addressed in other state assessments. School districts are also losing days of instruction in order to administer a test, which pulls staff away from essential work that does not match state requirements.

We have learned that many students who are not interested in the ACT test do not take the test seriously. A student's lack of interest in the exam is reflected on scores, and therefore providing a false narrative and score on the state school report cards. ACT scores are part of the equation for formulating a school districts "career readiness" score within the state school report cards. Many school districts have complained that these test results do not reflect the proper career readiness of their students. As we all know, poor school report cards can have an overall impact of economic and workforce development issues for our communities.

This legislation attempts to ease tax burdens to Ohio taxpayers in a year that we need to rein in spending. Currently, the State of Ohio spends roughly \$4 million within the biannual operating budget to pay for and administer ACT tests for all high school juniors. The bill would permit the parent or guardian of a high school student to opt out of taking the exam. Potentially saving roughly \$50,000 for every 1% decrease in participation, which again, is permissive.

Finally, the sub-bill you have before you today incorporates years' worth of hard work and makes substantial improvements to our state report card system.