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Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 233. This bill intends to protect student and staff safety, restore local control, and ensure our schools have the expertise they need to continue to promote student success.

As we are still dealing with the challenges of the pandemic, it is important to give schools as many options as possible to train school nurses. Senate Bill 233 offers schools the ability to restore ODE licensing for schools' nurses. As a result of the passage of HB 442 in the previous General Assembly, any nurse who wants to work in a school must complete registration through ODE and a background check. This process does not appropriately ensure that nurses have the knowledge necessary to practice the specialty of school nursing in the school environment. There are significant differences between the school nurse role and the role of an RN/LPN in a hospital or doctor's office. The ODE license and corresponding education requirements in SB 233 ensure school nurses know things outside of the typical RN scope applicable in school settings. This includes managing IEP/504 plans, writing student medical accommodations, delegating care to a non-healthcare licensed staff, understanding dispensing and special education rules, federal privacy laws applicable to schools, crafting emergency action plans for schools, and performing advanced student mental health assessments. This ODE license requires the completion of a school nurse education program and hands-on practicum in a school setting, which fills all those potential knowledge gaps.

To clarify, SB 233 would still allow a school to choose to hire an RN instead of a nurse with a school nurse license. This was true prior to the passage of HB 442, but under current law, school do not have this option.

Senate Bill 233 not only gives the proper training and education to the people that will be treating our children, but restores districts' ability to decide what is best for their students' needs. Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 233. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.