

Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
December 7, 2022
Sub. S.B. 178

Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chairman Blessing, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 178. My name is Elaine Long. My family, including children and grandchild, reside in Licking County.

I oppose Sub S.B. 178 because it undermines the very foundation of our representational democracy by denying voters their right to elect their representative to the State Board of Education and removes accountability of those members to the people of Ohio.

To justify denying voter rights and accountability within the elected system on a basis that voters do not know who their members are, is first merely a presumption and second provides an incorrect solution if one is in fact required. If there is a lack of awareness, then the solution should provide more awareness, exposure, and accountability to the voter, not less. As a voter, I may find my representative member and connect directly when there is a state policy affecting my family. If this is an appointed position, that accountability is removed and places too much power in the office of the Governor.

By making this an appointed position with bureaucratic staffing, it is at risk of cronyism. The lack of openness and appropriate public postings and review of this bill already speaks to a secretive process that would only continue when managed by an appointee. State educational policy will always affect local educational policies. To say the state level board does not need to be elected and accountable to the voter is to completely deny and misunderstand the levels of government included in a state and federal system.

This bill would fall under the practice of taxation without representation, creating yet another appointed department/committee funded by the taxpayers, but without accountability.

This bill would make a massive shift in how decisions are made for the education of our children that in no way aligns with a representative democracy. I ask you to act in opposition to this bill.

Thank you for your service to the people of Ohio. Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Respectfully,
Elaine Long