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Committees:
Education
Finance-Higher Education Subcommittee
Health & Human Services
Medicaid
Rules & Reference
Transportation, Commerce, & Labor

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Thank you Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee for this opportunity to present sponsor testimony for Senate Bill 34.

As a mother and retired school teacher, this piece of legislation is very important to me. This bill was introduced because parents, school board members and teachers reached out to me and shared the challenges of teaching in a hot classroom. Here in Ohio, the final days of summer are often the hottest days of the entire year. Many schools in the state of Ohio are without air conditioning and as result; students and teachers are forced to suffer through excessive heat in the buildings on a daily basis. Adequate teaching and learning are severely inhibited in such an environment.

Our research has found that it is cooler in June compared to August. The average temperature in the first two weeks of June is 77.7 degrees. The average temperature during the first two weeks of August is 83.4 degrees. Due to safety and security concerns, we know that more schools have windows that do not open all the way. This does not allow for the window to be open enough for a breeze to come through. Also, most schools are closed during summer, and research has shown that it is more cost effective to keep our schools cool in the spring than during the long summer days.

Another reason for this legislation is most people have a limited amount of vacation time. Starting after Labor Day extends the amount of time for families to take summer vacations. This additional vacation time for families also helps to promote economic activity. This can create and maintain jobs, providing additional local tax revenues that support our schools and local public safety resources. As most of you may remember, we recently changed the school year from days to hours. We are already seeing some districts electing to have longer days, which would still allow for long summers, should SB 34 pass.

Studies in South Carolina showed a scenario that if 40% of families took one more vacation in the year, the impact would create \$180 million in tourism related spending, \$6 million in new state tax revenue, and \$2.3 million in local tax revenue.

As the third largest industry in Michigan, tourism generates nearly \$19.5 billion in economic activity, 214,000 jobs and over \$1 billion in state tax revenue each year. The vast majority of this revenue is created during the summer, especially in July and August. Since the law was

changed in 2005, the state did a poll on their feelings towards the change of the school start date; it went from 67% in favor to 73% in favor after just two years.

I understand the concerns that some may have with the language, as some may argue that this legislation would create yet another state mandate. However, I am a proponent of local control, which is why I have added a provision allowing school boards to opt out of the mandate if they conduct at least one hearing. This would allow the public to share their concerns and the local governing board could then pass a resolution.

Thank you Chair Lehner and members of the committee. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.