

**Testimony by Lennie Jarratt, Project Manager,
Before the Ohio Senate Education Committee
Wednesday, November 8, 2017**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Lehner and members of the committee. I thank you for the opportunity to address you on this important issue. My name is Lennie Jarratt, and I am a project manager with The Heartland Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national think tank headquartered in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

One of the main issues Heartland has focused on since its founding in 1984 is making sure as many children as possible across the United States have access to the very best education they can receive, which is what brings me here to testify before you today.

Regulations are the price we pay for choosing to rely on political systems to detect and prevent inefficient or corrupt behavior. Every government layer of bureaucracy attempts to restrict the range of discretionary decision-making in the layer below it by imposing rules, requiring reports, and naming oversight committees. The more complex the service, the more costly, complicated, and detailed its rules and the less responsive it is in meeting the needs and desires of beneficiaries.

Many public schools here in Ohio and across the country underperform and fail their students, as well as their teachers, because they are overregulated. Unnecessary regulations take control out of the hands of local parents, teachers, and school administrators, those specifically placed to know best what students need. Teachers and administrators feel hamstrung by regulations they consider costly and unbeneficial, their existence smothering the innovation, flexibility, and creativity necessary to meet the academic needs of their unique students.

The common-sense reforms in the Public School Deregulation Act are sorely needed and have been designed in partnership with local superintendents to help ameliorate some of these problems. To cite one example, the past two decades of research shows fairly conclusively that there is no relationship between a teacher's credentials and his or her students' performance. Substitute teachers should not be required to have a postsecondary degree in a specific subject area, and the provision in the bill lifting that requirement is a welcome reform.^{1,2} If principals know they have a few good substitutes on hand, they will not have to worry about a specious credentialing requirement blocking them from putting those substitutes in classrooms where they are most needed.

¹ E. A. Hanushek and S. G. Rivkin, "Teacher Quality," in Eric Hanushek and Finis Welch eds., *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2006), pp. 1051-1075, <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Hanushek%2BRivkin%202006%20HbEEdu%202.pdf>

² Marcus Winters, "Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Credentials Unrelated to Student Achievement," *Issue Brief No. 10*, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, August 2011, https://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/ib_10.pdf#page3

More time spent by teachers bending over backwards to comply with unnecessary and burdensome regulations means less time spent educating their students. With only 45 percent of Ohio 4th graders³ and 36 percent of 8th graders⁴ testing “proficient” in math on the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, also known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” and only 38 percent of 4th graders⁵ and 36 percent of 8th graders⁶ testing proficient in reading, we are seeing the harm these regulations can do. The reforms in the Public School Deregulation Act can help to improve these scores by helping Ohio teachers provide the quality of education Ohio parents expect and Ohio children deserve.

Something needs to be done to help these kids, as well as the teachers and administrators who work diligently to get the best out of their charges with the tools they have in front of them. They should not have to go to work every day feeling like they have one hand tied behind them. By helping to relieve them of that feeling, by making their job easier, the Public School Deregulation Act can be a key component in helping to improve the Buckeye State’s public schools.

For more information about The Heartland Institute’s work, please visit our website at www.heartland.org. You may also call John Nothdurft, Heartland’s director of government relations, at 312/377-4000 or reach him by e-mail at john@heartland.org.

³ “2015 Mathematics State Snapshot Report – Ohio, Grade 4,” Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016009OH4.pdf>

⁴ “2015 Mathematics State Snapshot Report – Ohio, Grade 8,” Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016009OH8.pdf>

⁵ “2015 Reading State Snapshot Report – Ohio, Grade 4,” Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016008OH4.pdf>

⁶ “2015 Reading State Snapshot Report – Ohio, Grade 8,” Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016008OH8.pdf>