

May 20, 2020

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee, first I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 322.

My name is Donna DeWitt. I am currently an Ohio retired teacher having taught for 30 years. In addition to a B.S. Degree, I also have an M.A. Degree in Classroom Teaching and an additional one in Educational Leadership. I hold various teaching licensures including High School Communication, English, and Journalism; Principal Pre-K through 6; Supervisor; and Education of Handicapped (K-12). Since my retirement, I have scored the edTPA and the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA). I am also a National Board Certified Teacher. I certified in 2002 in the area of Exceptional Needs Specialist, Mild to Moderate, Birth to 21 and recertified in 2012.

The RESA program is based on the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession, and the passing standard is set by Ohio. To complete the RESA, teachers submit one classroom video and written teacher reflection as evidence of their teaching performance. These are reviewed and scored by trained assessors who have at least 10 years of teaching and professional development experience. These assessors go through rigorous training and must pass a certification test to be able to score. I have been scoring the RESA since its inception. The original RESA might have been a lot to ask of beginning teachers, though I believe the professional development benefit to be well worth it. The new RESA is significantly scaled down and the process has been streamlined to make it much more manageable for beginning teachers, but it preserves the benefit to their professional development and, most importantly, their impact on student learning.

To become a National Board Certified Teacher, I completed a process similar to the RESA, but it was much more in depth and time consuming. The National Board Certification process required me to take a look at *what* I was teaching, *why* I was teaching it but most importantly to reflect and analyze how it had an impact on student learning. The process was rigorous, but it was the best and most beneficial professional development of my career. Imagine, if I had done this earlier in my career through a program such as the RESA, what an opportunity it would have been to hone my craft and have a greater, more effective impact on student learning. Therefore, as a National Board Certified Teacher, I recognize the importance and value of this process for beginning teachers in Ohio.

I am concerned that if the RE program and RESA are eliminated that this opportunity for teachers to take a look at what they are doing in the classroom, why they are doing it, and how it impacts student learning will be lost in the process. Local professional development committees (LPDC) are made up of district teachers and administrators who would be required to create new programs for these beginning teachers. There would be no continuity and the programs would vary across the state leading to inequity of quality. Furthermore, these same educators and administrators serving on the LPDC committee are presently dealing with the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused. Their time and attention should not be spent reinventing the wheel for mentoring programs.

There is widespread agreement across America that we must do more to improve student achievement and we must recognize that effective teachers are the most critical factor inside of schools.

The RESA serves as the backbone of the RE Program motivating district leaders to invest in mentoring and supporting beginning teachers. At the same time, it encourages beginning teachers to focus on their professional development and listen to feedback in order to become more effective. The end result is that they will have a greater impact on student learning, which is at the heart of it all.

Sincerely,

Donna L. DeWitt