

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: _____

Name: _____

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Best Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): _____

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.



Toledo City School District Board of Education
Polly Taylor-Gerken, Member

Toledo Public Schools
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House Economic and Workforce Development Committee

Senate Bill 1 Opponent Testimony

May 9, 2023

Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chairman Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, I urge you to keep partisan politics out of our system of public education and vote no on Senate Bill 1.

My name is Polly Taylor-Gerken and as a member of the Board of Education of the Toledo City School District, one of the largest public school districts in the State of Ohio, I fight for our students every day. I, along with my colleagues, understand that all students deserve a high-quality education which will enable them to achieve success and continue to advance this state and our country.

In 1953, the citizens amended the Ohio Constitution and entrusted a non-partisan entity, the State Board of Education, to advance Ohio's education policy along with local boards of education. With 11 of the 19 members of the State Board of Education elected by the people, Ohio citizens have always had direct representation and the ability to hold this body accountable for its actions. Senate Bill 1 eliminates the voice of everyday Ohioans and seeks to dismantle the education framework set up by the people seventy years ago.

Specifically, Senate Bill 1 would transfer power from the State Board of Education to an individual appointed by the Governor who is not directly answerable to the citizens. This legislation is not only anti-democratic as it silences the voices of Ohio families, but it seeks to inject partisan politics into Ohio's nonpartisan system of public education.

Senate Bill 1 would allow whichever party is in power to prioritize their own political agenda and dramatically alter education policy and funding with little oversight or accountability. While Senate Bill 1 may serve your agenda today, what will come when your party may no longer be in power? We cannot afford to play games with our children's education.

Education reform in Ohio must be student-centered and made by individuals with knowledge and expertise. For Toledo Public Schools, this means focusing on our relationships with students and their families to address inequities in public education, and advancing policies that allow our teachers, administrators, and staff to achieve professional success.

Give our students, their families, and our hardworking educators the system of public education they deserve, the democratic system of public education that the people advanced seventy years ago and vote no on Senate Bill 1.

Thank you Chairman Swearingen and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee for your attention and the opportunity to explain why Senate Bill 1 is not only bad governance, but endangers our students' right to a quality education.

/s/ Polly Taylor-Gerken

Toledo City School District, Board of Education