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**Sarah Fowler Arthur**  
State Representative

Chair Mathews, Vice-Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Public Health Policy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on HB602, regarding Home Education Learning Pods.

A Home Education Learning Pod is very similar to a Homeschool Co-op, where parents and home educating families cooperatively provide education in selected subjects, take group field trips, and participate in group activities together. “Learning Pods” are generally smaller than a co-op and may rotate which parents provide instruction to the students at various times and differing locations. Nationally, they seem to have become more popular during and after the Covid-19 pandemic as families considered new and innovative ways to provide home instruction and extra curriculars.

Unfortunately, regulatory processes have not kept pace with the changing education environment and have posed hurdles for Ohio families participating in Home Education Learning Pods. Several months ago, our office received a complaint from an Ohio home educating family in Representative Bird’s district which was being forced to register as an in-home daycare because a preschool aged sibling attended learning pod activities with a school-aged sibling.

After researching this issue, including conversations with the Department of Children and Youth and conversations with state and national homeschool groups, we have become aware that this is a challenge facing many home educating families nationally as state regulations struggle to find the appropriate place for Home Education Learning Pods in existing regulatory structures. This legislation will provide the needed regulatory structure in Ohio law, while clarifying important details about parental presence, participation of preschool-aged siblings, and exemption from daycare regulations.

Families choosing home education deserve a clear process that will not unfairly burden or complicate the processes through which instruction and extra curricular activities are provided. This law change will provide that clarity for families participating in Home Education Learning Pods. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Sarah Fowler Arthur