

To all it may concern:

My name is Rhonda Hills, I am a parent in Cleveland, Ohio. I would like this to serve as my written testimony for the purpose of the hearings to be held on state funding in the area of Education.

First and foremost I like to thank you all for allowing me to voice my concerns on the topic. Secondly, I like to thank this committee for helping this General Assembly to resolve the issues of funding. The application of funding in the various educational systems has been unethical and illegal with no purposed solution in sight. So, in an effort to reform the educational vessels in Ohio, the issue of funding sooner or later will come to the forefront of the debate of how to educate and it is no better time than the present to deal with the topic.

We have had many barriers throughout the years that has hindered the liberty of a free and appropriate public education for all. We have had sexism, racism, and classism hinder a group to the right of a public education. Each instance in time was met with resistance and then reform.

We today have had this machinery of politicians and a certain private sector (charter schools) that have manage to threaten not a particular group but public education as a whole. Any public institution should be preserved for the public and funded from the public and regulated by the public. Private entities should not control a public entity. In Cleveland our school system open their books to their "corporate partners" and our school system went further into debt. They use hundreds of thousands on consultant fees to the Boston Group and even more money to the American Development group for the first transformation plan(which sounds a lot like the current transformation plan). Two of the key people in the American Development group that was paid was the CMSD own CEO and CFO during that time frame. The public knows but Mayoral control along with recent state laws have us powerless to the devices of others who do not use CMSD for the purpose of educating, yet they have had more say in the direction that this public system will go in education our children.

For this and other reasons many have left the district in hopes to find a better system to educate their children in. And this is fine. Each parent should have the right to choose the venue that their children will be educated in. It should not be the governments nor the public at large responsibility to pay for a parents choice to move outside the public system to educate. Nor should charters or any other private institue be able to operate on the publics expense.

Public dollars should pay for a public education only. The economy is weak, state and federal funding is limited. funding of one educational system with one funding source will be more effective and financially sound than funding of many educational systems with one funding source.

In order to provide for your public students whose parents have not given up on the public education system should not have to share limited resource with educational systems that are privately operated. Part of being privately operated means you operate on private funds. Charter schools parade around saying they are public schools because they receive public dollars. But it is so much more to a public educational system than just being funded with public dollars. with the exception of Cleveland parents (being under the regime of mayoral control) parents have say so in the direction of the system, they have say so in the curriculum and how it is applied. Parents have redress. Charters problem solve by telling you that you can leave you dont have to keep your child here you have choice. Public schools can not address parents in such a manner.

If a private charter or community school wants public dollars, they should be able to meet public standards and mandates without being sponsored, and moreover, if a private charter or community school wants public dollars they need to give parents rights. Too many parents have been told by the charter regime that it is a school of choice so if you take issue with anything you can chose to go some whereelse. Not to mention the stories I have heard when it comes to children with IEP's or 504 plans.

I invite you all to come to Cleveland and hear from the parents that they won't bus down to present to you and you will see a greater reality of what parents are dealing with on all levels of the educational debate.

If you allow the charters students money to follow them it will also be another way not to meet federal and state standards and undermine the purpos of sponsorship. it will also be another nail in the coffin for the public educational system.

Please help to perserve a great public institution, the public schools all across this Great State of Ohio are depending on you.

Thank You for allowing my written concerns to play a part in the decision of funding of schools. I have a 3rd grader and a 6th grader who are being educated in a public system. It is my hope that the public educational system be not destroyed before they can graduate from the 12th grade.

Sincerely,

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Highly Favored