

Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the Committee:

My name is Erin Stevens and I am a teacher in the Pickerington Local School District. I have 16 years of teaching experience as an intervention specialist 13 years being at the high school level.

I offer testimony in support of HB 239, the Testing Reduction Act. Testing is what we call the fifth season in our building. We have testing for our yearly IEPs, three year re-evaluations of students, SLO testing which is Common Assessment testing twice a year in subjects that are not AIR tested areas, AIR tests (the state-required tests), and the currently mandated ACT testing for Juniors. If students are in AP classes, they also have those tests. In order to schedule all of this testing, we begin in April and go through the last day of school in May due to make up tests, for a total of 48 school days on our testing calendar. It's just too much.

As an intervention specialist, I work closely with special education students. For these students, being out of class for up to 48 days creates a compounded problem of them missing instructional time. For those taking or re-taking tests such as AIR or ACT that affect graduation points or in the case of ACT that could be used for the current alternate pathway, a teacher is now forced to look at where the priority should be placed. These timeframes all also fall within weeks of each other, which does not give these students much time to have time to prepare/recover from the mass amount of testing.

The pressure to perform and do well is not lost on students. While proctoring this spring, you are instructed to circulate amongst your group of students. As I was doing so, I noticed a student had not progressed through questions for about 5 minutes. I went around the group and as I got to the student, I saw that this student who was taking their test for the first time had written on their scrap paper, "I'm going to fail, I'm stupid, I suck." Due to the fact that as a proctor you must stick to the script, you cannot say anything to any student. This is a student who I know personally outside of school and this goes against everything as a teacher, to turn into a robot and let this child cry in front of me as they have these feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness.

By reducing the state mandated standardized tests to the federal minimum and allowing districts to convene a work group to determine recommendations would allow best practices in order to reduce the amount of time spent on testing. This allows districts to continue to do further research in order to determine what works best for its students and to provide more time on instruction and more time for intervention.

I urge you to vote for HB 239 and the provisions that Representative Manning and Representative Crawley have outlined. I thank you for your time and your consideration.