Dear Representative,

It was with great concern that I learned of [the Ohio House’s decision](http://www.plunderbund.com/2014/03/26/house-education-committee-hijacks-bill/) to make significant, drastic, and educationally unsound changes to SB 229. As an educator I have grave concerns regarding the policies regarding public education that are developed in Columbus.

The evaluative protocol being imposed on local schools from outside the district is an illustration of both the lack of familiarity with a student’s development through their relationship with their teachers as well as further encroachment by the government on local school districts’ rights to self-regulate.

There are a variety of factors that are components to a student’s education, and, though no one argues the necessity of a highly qualified teacher, aspects beyond the control of the classroom teacher have significant influence on a student’s success. For about 50 minutes per day I have the opportunity to spend time with a student. In a large class I may not be able to have the deep and meaningful connections necessary to help guide a student through the complexity of the subject I teach. Hopefully, over the course of time, I can connect with as many students as I can and nurture within them that spark of the love of learning for knowledge’s sake.

We have made innumerable sacrifices to the whole of a student’s education on the altar of higher test scores. Teachers have become unwilling accomplices in the crime against teaching holistically as we are forced to essentially “teach to the test” because such a profound (and artificial) significance is placed on these test scores. We have reduced children to a series of statistics and we gauge their value on how well they score on a multiple choice test (flawed by its very structure as it allows for guessing a correct answer rather than knowing it) given on a particular day or over the course of a particular week (or weeks depending on how many tests the state determines are needed to acquire data).

This dehumanization of the child is abhorrent and does nothing to improve education. With the current and ongoing legislation being developed in Columbus and implemented across the state this educational Frankenstein monster now swallows up the teachers themselves. Now teachers are evaluated using the same type of flawed logic we have imposed on our students. The evaluative criteria are arbitrary. It is constructed with no substantive input from specialist in the field, i.e. the teachers themselves. It does not take into consideration the vast dynamic forces of the child’s everyday lived experience that influence their school performance. These factors could include something as simple as the fact that some students do not do well on standardized tests because they are kinesthetic or visual learners. Maybe the student was very tired on the test. Maybe they have a home life that is not supportive. Or kids are pulled between two households because of a divorce. The possibilities are endless.

So when a student performs poorly, it is the teacher’s fault regardless of other factors. Therefore I am a bad teacher. By extrapolation we can say, using the same argument, that since crime still exists police officers are not doing a very good job. As such, we will fire them or reduce their salary. People still become sick. Doctors should then be fired. It makes no difference that I know nothing of law enforcement or that I haven’t studied medicine. I’ll arbitrarily impose these impossible expectations on people, deny them the means to do the job adequately (like the massive cuts to education under the current administration) and then punish them when they fail. It’s kind of like testing my students on something I’ve never taught them, then determining that they are lazy or unintelligent because they did not know the answers. Sounds a bit silly, doesn’t it?

With the House’s decision to make a bad bill worse it has made even more clear the anti-public education, anti-teacher, and most insidious, anti-child agenda of the lawmaking body in the state. One needs only look at states like North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and others to see the future for public education in Ohio. The mistakes made in other places in the past are now being implemented in the state of Ohio. It would be funny if it wasn’t so damaging.

Public schools are held to a much higher standard (in terms of regulation and assessment) than charter or parochial schools. The public is then told that public schools are failing and competitive charter schools will save education. Statistics do not show this. In the last ten years public schools, with all the intrusiveness of government, have consistently outperformed charter schools with very few exceptions (those exceptions primarily coming from charters with huge coffers). Legislators then hide behind words like “Choice”, “Competition”, Freedom”. I will use these words: “Plutocratic”, Exclusive”, “Unaccountable”, “Unequal”, and “Un-American”.

School funding in Ohio was ruled unconstitutional on March 24, 1997. As of today, nearly 20 years later, there has been no attempt to rectify this situation. As a legislator you are accountable. Since this fact, and a myriad of other shortcomings still plague our state (poverty, crime, environmental issues, gender inequality, racial discrimination, child abuse, predatory lending, etc.) it is obvious ***you*** have failed as a lawmaker. Are you responsible for all of these things? Can you fix all these problems? According to the spirit of the laws being passed in Ohio regarding education it would seem that by the same logic you are.

In light of your openly antagonistic, anti-education legislative efforts I must, as a concerned citizen and tax payer, ask for, no, demand your immediate resignation from your position on the Education Committee. You have neither the qualifications, experience, or will to provide the leadership necessary to make sound decisions for the children, teachers, and other caregivers of the state of Ohio.

I’ll close with a phrase I sometimes hear about teachers: “I pay your salary. You work for me.” Guess what? I pay ***your*** salary. You work for ***me***.

I accept your resignation.