



Representative Kent Smith
Ohio House District 8

January 29, 2020

Dear Representatives and Senators of the HB 9 Conference Committee,

I have had the privilege of representing East Cleveland since January 1, 2015. A recent report said East Cleveland is the poorest community in Ohio and the 4th poorest city in the nation. The median household income in East Cleveland is \$19,953, whereas the median household income statewide is \$69,632. According to Ohio Department of Education data, every single East Cleveland student (100%) are economically disadvantaged. 27.2% have a Special Education designation which is almost 3 times the state average.

Despite these substantial challenges East Cleveland City Schools have made tremendous progress. According to the state report card before being taken over by the state, East Cleveland City Schools saw improvement in 15 of 21 state performance measures. Their four elementary schools received grades of A, B or C for their Valued Added / Progress measure.

On May 1, 2019, the Ohio House voted 83-12 to end state takeovers of public school districts and they did so for good reason. As the *The Canton Repository* wrote in its editorial entitled, "[Time for Ohio to Abolish School Takeovers](#)" on March 17, 2019: "What began as a noble carrot-and-stick idea, however, has shown little evidence of improving educational outcomes where it is in place: Youngstown, Lorain and East Cleveland. It can be argued, in fact, things are worse, with more parental disconnect, low employee morale and high administration turnover reported in those districts. We urge lawmakers and the governor to end this failed idea."

As you move into conference committee, please consider removing not just Lorain, but also East Cleveland and Youngstown from state control.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact my office if you have any follow up questions by reaching Bettina Hahn-Lawson at (614) 466-5441 or Bettina.Hahn-Lawson@ohiohouse.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent Smith".

Kent Smith