



PROPONENT TESTIMONY

**A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION:
TO URGE CONGRESS TO DISMANTLE
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

S.C.R. No. 16

March 24, 2026

VERBAL AND WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE

OHIO SENATE
Education Committee

TESTIMONY BY

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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of this committee:

My name is James Paul, and I am the director of state education policy at America First Policy Institute (AFPI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that develops research and policy to put the American people first. When it comes to education, AFPI empowers parents to find learning environments that work best for kids. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 16.

The U.S. Department of Education does not educate a single child in Ohio, or anywhere in America, for that matter. Recently, the agency saw its staff reduced by half, and no classroom in this state was affected.

There is little evidence that the federal Department of Education (ED) has made any positive impact on students since it was founded in 1979. Fewer than one-third of eighth graders, nationally, were proficient in math and reading in 2024—this is after \$268 billion in annual federal education spending. Forty-six years and trillions of dollars have not helped students.

That is why I am grateful to support of SCR 16. The resolution does two things. First, it calls on Congress to make permanent the administrative changes underway at the federal level. Second, it directs Ohio's Legislature to work with state agencies and officials to build a comprehensive plan—creating an inventory of federal programs, identifying statutory changes and waivers needed to assume control over education, and preparing legislation for introduction.

The U.S. Department of Education does not improve student outcomes. What it does instead is create rules, many that are ideological and expensive, and all of which favor compliance and box-checking over classroom instruction. A 2024 Title IX rule threatened federal funding to be taken from Ohio schools that declined to open girls' locker rooms to biological boys. A 2014 guidance threatened civil rights investigations for districts whose discipline data showed racial disparities, regardless of whether policies were applied evenly, and ultimately produced more disorder in districts that followed it. Proposed regulations on the Charter School Program in 2022 would have undermined successful charter schools, made it harder for



them to access federal grants, and forced them to “collaborate” with competitors who try to close them down.

Americans trust states more than the federal government to make education decisions. The most common objections I hear about dismantling ED are that this would somehow cut Title I funding, remove special education protections, and disrupt financial aid. But I assure you that none of this is true.

All of these programs predate the Department of Education. Title I was created in 1965. Pell Grants were created in 1972. IDEA was created in 1975. ED inherited these programs when it was founded, and they can be redeployed to other agencies and (as appropriate) down to the states. Secretary McMahon is already taking these actions, having established 10 interagency agreements that transfer program administration to Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services.

However, every one of these changes could be reversed by future administrations in Washington. Only Congress can make this permanent, which is why the message being sent by SCR 16 is so important: that Ohio supports dismantling ED and has a plan to assume more control.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 16. Thank you.

