



**Senate Finance Committee
House Bill 96
Interested Party Testimony
June 4, 2025**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill (HB) 96 on behalf of my public library, Lorain Public Library System.

My name is Richard J. Ackerman, Trustee for the Lorain Public Library System, and resident of Sheffield Lake, Ohio. I am an experienced school administrator with over 47 years of service in the Elyria School system. I have dedicated my life to trying to impart knowledge to thousands and thousands of students during that time.

Knowledge = Power

Truthful knowledge is defined by the scientific method. The knowledge needs to be shared with everyone. Not just a few. Senators, please explain to me why you would ever want to limit knowledge to any Ohioan. Or why would you want to limit knowledge to only a few people? Because they don't understand how to how to get truth? How to research? It is a really simple equation. Knowledge as defined by truth equals power. And power equals opportunities for all. Not just a few. Our Founding Fathers back at the First Continental Congress in 1787, with Benjamin Franklin, Puritans such as Manassas Cutler and ten other New Englanders met. At the First Continental Congress they defined what they wanted Ohio to be. At that time, it was the Northwest Territory. They had certain ideals about what Ohio would be. Ohio would be led by knowledge and science. And it would be an abolitionist state. I just need somebody to explain to me how and why we would limit knowledge to anyone.

Public libraries provide equal access to knowledge for all Ohioans. We provide this service to everyone because we believe that the knowledge that they get from a library, however they get it, is useful to them. The Governor proposed keeping the Public Library Fund as a percentage of the General Revenue Fund. Our funding system has been consistent for years and years and years, and now all of a sudden, you are drastically changing it. And my question is, for what? It is the same thing I asked your colleagues in the House of Representatives. Why? For what? Why would you do that? It makes no sense.