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Bill Number: HB2738

Revising the special education state aid statewide excess costs calculation to count additional funding, requiring the state board of education to determine each school district's excess costs and to establish a special education state aid equalization distribution schedule.

Position: Opponent Testimony, Written-only

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 3:30 PM

Committee: House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Chair: Rep. Kristey Williams

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to HB2738

As a retired teacher, I understand the importance of adequate funding for special education which the legislature hasn't supplied. As a state, we need to provide a good education for all our students. I have seen how students have succeeded with supports from the special ed personnel. Cooperation between "regular" classroom teachers and special ed teachers also leads to benefits for all students.

This bill presents a whole new calculation of funding without due diligence on its impacts to our public school students. Any recommendations to change the current method of calculating special education funding should be vetted by experts and stakeholders. In fact, a Special Education Task Force was created for just this purpose, however the members were not invited to provide input on these changes.

Additionally, the public was not given ample time to review and fully understand the implications of HB2738. Conducting a transparent and accessible legislative process that provides ample opportunity for stakeholders to provide meaningful public feedback is imperative to our democratic process. However, it seems like HB2738 is being rushed through committee.

I respectfully urge you to oppose HB2738 in its current form. Instead, please refer it to the special task force for review and recommendation, and allow the public ample to review and understand the drastic changes proposed to special education funding.