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House Education Committee **Testimony Re: House Bill 441**

Dan Dodd

Ohio Association of Independent Schools - Executive Director

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Derickson, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent regarding House Bill 441.

OHSAA Commissioner Dan Ross was quoted in April of last year saying, "I believe high school sports should be about kids having fun, kids participating, kids learning a game and kids learning life lessons. What life lessons are they going to learn? Team work, camaraderie ... commitment, dedication, all those pieces." Commissioner Ross later said, "Our game isn't about who wins. Our game is about what lessons did you learn in this journey through your experience of playing high school sports. It is important and it is things they will be carrying with them for the rest of their lives."

OAIS member schools could not agree more with the sentiments of Commissioner Ross. That is why we are so disappointed in OHSAA's continued efforts to discourage and, in the case of international students, forbid, students from seeking out the positive experiences of playing high school sports. The current OHSAA by-laws would lead to the situation we saw at the last hearing, where a group of close-knit girls would be needlessly broken apart. The adults who are proposing and creating these by-laws have forgotten what high school sports are really all about: "Teamwork, camaraderie, commitment, dedication, all those pieces." It seems the main thing OHSAA cares about these days is making it more difficult for students to participate rather than getting more students interested in sports. The decisions seem to be based on what is best for adults rather than what is best for students.

In recent years, the General Assembly has stepped up and eased the way for private school students to participate in athletics so that choosing the best education for a student does not have to come at the expense of the valuable lessons learned through extracurricular activities. Please continue this body's good work in expanding opportunities for all students attending school in Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

- Agnon School
- Andrews Osborne Academy
- Birchwood School
- Canton Country Day
- Cincinnati Country Day
- Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy
- Columbus Academy
- Columbus Jewish Day School
- Columbus School for Girls
- Columbus Torah Academy
- Gilmour Academy
- Grand River Academy
- Hathaway Brown School
- Hawken School
- Hershey Montessori School
- Hudson Montessori School
- Lake Ridge Academy
- Laurel School
- Lawrence School
- Linden Grove School
- Lippman Day School
- Mansion Day School
- Marburn Academy
- Maumee Valley Country Day
- McGuffey Foundation School
- Miami Valley School
- The New School
- Old Trail School
- Olney Friends School
- Ratner School
- Ridgewood School
- Ruffing Montessori School - Cleveland Heights
- Ruffing Montessori School - Rocky River
- Schilling School for Gifted Children
- Seven Hills School
- Spring Garden Waldorf School
- Springer School and Center
- Summit Country Day
- University School
- Village Academy Schools
- Wellington School
- Welsh Hills School
- Western Reserve Academy