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**THE OHIO 8 COALITION URGES SENATE TO REVERT BACK TO EXISTING LAW ALLOWING
SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO CONTROL THEIR OWN BUILDINGS**

Ohio Senate must push back on state overreach that weakens local control

COLUMBUS, OH - The Ohio 8 Coalition is urging lawmakers to halt the advancement of a provision in the state budget that would force the sale of public-school buildings to charter schools.

The Executive version of the State Operating Budget suggested that school districts be forced to give buildings that are “under enrolled at 60%” and sold under market value to local charter schools. While the House version of the Operating budget regarding control of school buildings improved the Executive language, The Ohio 8 Coalition is urging that the Senate revert back to existing law, which narrows the role of the State in how school districts control their own property, which are primarily paid for by local taxpayers.

“The Ohio Senate must revert back to existing law when it comes to school facilities language. Anything else is a direct attack on local, public school district control,” said Dr. Romules Durant, Toledo Public Schools Superintendent and Ohio 8 Co-Chair. “Ohio public school districts have had enough intrusion into local decision making. We will push back on any effort to undermine taxpayer investments in public schools, especially those supported by levies that have been passed to support the upkeep of those buildings—some of which are historical landmarks that have become pillars of the neighborhoods they serve.”

Additional implications of these proposed provisions could include the closure of school buildings that support specialized programming or buildings such as:

- Technology, automotive, barber school, STEM, performing arts, medically fragile student services
- School-based health services (including mental health)
- Other programs specific to a district's demographics and long-term educational planning

“Our public-school buildings are not vacant lots, gathering dust,” said Pat Shipe, President of Akron Education Association and Ohio 8 Co-Chair. “These buildings have a purpose, and the districts have plans for them. To force their sale to charter schools will have long-term, irreversible consequences for the students and families in those communities.”

Ohio 8 urges the Senate to maintain existing law as it relates to school facilities, and allow Ohio communities to retain decision-making power over its public-school buildings—buildings funded, built, and maintained by local taxpayers. We call on Ohio lawmakers to create and uphold policies that invest in public education, not dismantle it.

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