December 11, 2017

Thank you Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby and Ranking Member Fedor, and House Education and Career Readiness Committee members.

My name is Gabriella Celeste and I submit this testimony to you as an interested party in legislative matters concerning school discipline and student supports, specifically HB 360. As the Director of Policy with the Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University and Co-Director of our

and contributing causes to the bullying behavior in order to develop targeted strategies to reduce or eliminate bullying. Notifying and engaging parents is an important aspect of developing such individualized approaches. Training for teachers and staff is also an essential part of a comprehensive prevention strategy. Research suggests that "when teachers and staff are aware of their schools' policies and are trained in how to effectively identify as well as address bullying incidents, victimization rates are substantially lower."

Specific Concerns with HB 360 and Recommendations

While HB 360 makes some effort to incorporate some of what research suggests works with bullying behaviors, for example by encouraging reflective learning and support through counseling for both the bullying and the bullied student, it focuses more on imposing sanctions that increasingly exclude students from the school through in-school and out of school suspensions and expulsion. The requirement for the extension of a suspension into a subsequent school year furthers this exclusion without consideration of individual factors. Instead, these decisions should be determined on an individual basis, ideally through a school-based behavioral intervention team.

An individualized assessment and targeted approach, rather than one-size-fits-all sanctions, would better ensure that the interventions used are approp