

Proposed: 12/07/2020

RESOLUTION NO. 132-2020 (CRR)

By Council Member

A Resolution expressing support for House Bill 305 and Senate 376; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, a high quality and vibrant public-school system is important to the maintenance of our democracy and to the City of Cleveland Heights and all of its residents in maintaining and increasing property values and in keeping Cleveland Heights a diverse and exciting place to live; and

WHEREAS, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District (“CH-UH School District”) has been harmed by state legislation that requires deficit funding for vouchers issued by the school system to fund students who are residents of the City but who attend private schools; and

WHEREAS, beginning as early as 1997, the Ohio Supreme Court has on three occasions declared the state’s school funding system unconstitutional and ordered the state to remedy the violation by creating an entirely new system; and

WHEREAS, state lawmakers have failed entirely to enact a constitutionally-permissible school funding system, in spite of the Ohio Supreme Court’s orders; and

WHEREAS, the funding of schools and the deficit funding of vouchers continue to be in contravention of the Ohio Constitution; and

WHEREAS, this Council is aware that the state’s unconstitutional school funding system creates an overreliance on local property taxes to fund the school system, and that constituents in the CH-UH School District were almost evenly divided recently on the issue of raising more property taxes to support the district; and

WHEREAS, funding inequities for schools has had a secondary effect of causing the schools to become resegregated by race and has created a false perception that public schools provide a lower quality education; and

WHEREAS, both the unconstitutional funding system and the deficit financing of vouchers have caused the CH-UH School District to ask for tax levies that would likely have been unnecessary had the state enacted a funding structure for schools that did not violate the Ohio Constitution; and

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WHEREAS, House Bill 305 and Senate Bill 376 are bi-partisan bills that, if passed, would provide great relief to the CH-UH School District by increasing the funding to schools while still allowing vouchers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, that:

SECTION 1. This Council does hereby endorse and declare its support for House Bill 305 and Senate Bill 376 and urges the Ohio legislature to pass the same. This Council believes that passage of both bills is a step toward correcting the unconstitutional funding system that has harmed the City of Cleveland Heights and the CH-UH School District.

SECTION 2. The Clerk of Council is hereby directed to send a copy of this Resolution to Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio House Speaker Robert Cupp, Ohio Senate President Larry Obhof, Ohio House Representative Janine Boyd, and Ohio Senator Sandra Williams.

SECTION 3. Notice of the passage of this Resolution shall be given by publishing the title and abstract of its contents, prepared by the Director of Law, once in one newspaper of general circulation in the City of Cleveland Heights.

SECTION 4. This Resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the inhabitants of the City of Cleveland Heights, such emergency being the need timely need to voice support for House Bill 305 and Senate Bill 376. Wherefore, provided it received the affirmative vote of five (5) or more of the members elected or appointed to this Council, this Resolution shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest time allowed by law.

JASON S. STEIN, Mayor
President of Council

AMY HIMMELEIN
Clerk of Council

PASSED: