

**Mary Rachael Wallace**  
**Testimony for the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center**

Dear Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield, and members of the Committee:

My name is Mary Rachael Wallace and I grew up and live in Toledo. I am an elected Director for the Greater Toledo Pool Recreation District, a teacher at Toledo High School, and the mother of three daughters that love to swim.

I am writing in support of funding for the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center. Materials for this request have been submitted by Representative David Gomberg.

The Toledo Pool has been a community staple for generations, my grandparents helped build it, my parents learned to swim there, I learned to swim there, and now my children have learned to swim there. I can remember taking swimming lessons in elementary school and now my daughters have been able to learn to swim with their classes as a part of education in Toledo. This is vital to our community, not just as recreation, but as a safety issue. Our small town is surrounded by water of many forms, lakes, rivers, streams, and the ocean, so it is imperative that people here know how to swim. The pool has provided that experience to thousands of children throughout the years, but now it is our pool that needs help. With the funds for a reconstruction of the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center we can ensure that generations to come have the skills they need to be safe in the water.

The pool is a safe place for so many in our community. It is located in the heart of Toledo so that it is a walkable distance for many citizens, allowing kids to use it as a place to meet up and be active. In normal years we have after school programs that bus students directly from the school to the swimming pool. Electronics and water don't get along, so while the kids are in the pool they aren't staring at a screen, they are socializing and being active. It is not just the young that find the pool to be a safe place, for many people swimming is the safest form of exercise. The low impact workout activities the pool provides are, for some, the only exercise they are able to do safely. We have a dedicated group of lap swimmers and water aerobic participants that depend on the pool to stay healthy.

I got involved with the Greater Toledo Pool Recreation District because I have seen the benefits it brings to the community, which are too many to list. Public pools are closing throughout our nation and our state, making it more and more difficult for people to find a safe place to play, learn, be active, and connect in the water. This pool gave me so much confidence and joy. I want to make sure it is here to provide that opportunity to the generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration of funding the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center. It really is an important part of our community and well-being.

Thank you,

Mary "Rachael" Wallace