



February 13, 2020

Chairman Jones and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the 21 schools and over 3000 students that comprise The Lutheran Schools of Ohio. It is an honor to be able to speak to you about House Bill 9.

We are in strong support of House Bill 9. There are two important issues that I believe this bill addresses. First, increasing the income guidelines will provide the opportunity for more students to have access to a scholarship. Giving more parents the ability to choose the education their child will receive is crucial and this bill addresses that need. The appropriation for EdChoice Expansion was increased dramatically in the most recent budget, so we should fulfill the promise that was made to so many parents last year that a scholarship would be made available to them in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. The fact that so many parents had begun making decisions about their child's education, and now we are possibly removing the opportunity for those scholarships, is not fair to those families. Second, this helps public schools by reducing the number of underperforming schools. While I represent nonpublic schools, I believe that it is important to support all schools in our state so that all students have an opportunity to succeed. This should be the first step toward a remedy for the state report card issue.

I also want to communicate to you that we are extremely concerned about Senate Bill 89. I appeal to the committee to reevaluate the ideas of Senate Bill 89. A complete overhaul of the EdChoice system in our state is not the answer to the issues we are facing right now. Senate Bill 89 would be horrible for our schools, our communities, and most importantly for our parents. Why would we consider overhauling a system without any warning, without any time to debate and discuss, without any time to plan ahead for our schools? Senate Bill 89 is quite literally pulling the rug out from our families as so many families would not have access to a scholarship. With Senate Bill 89, a student who qualifies for an EdChoice Traditional scholarship, AND an EdChoice Expansion scholarship, would have to be moved to an EdChoice Expansion scholarship. This would drastically increase the number of students on an expansion scholarship, and without increasing the appropriation, this will be devastating to our families and to our schools.

In light of the debate, negotiations, and discussions surrounding EdChoice over the last month, it is my opinion that House Bill 9 was a good compromise for everyone involved. Our public schools would be helped by the reduction in underperforming schools. Our families would be helped by having access to a scholarship. And our non-public schools would be helped by not having the whole EdChoice system overhauled at the last minute. It is important that we support the choice that parents should have in choosing the school their child attends. House Bill 9 would allow our parents to have that choice! Please support House Bill 9 and abandon Senate Bill 89.

Thank you.

Kevin Creutz

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