

Audrey Kimnach Testimony

Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Audrey Kimnach and I attend Finneytown High School in Cincinnati. I am asking you to support public schools instead of using public dollars for private schools. It is a parent's choice to turn down free education and choose private school. As much as it hurts me to say this, it seems like the representatives and senators who support Ed Choice are favoring people who have more money. If public schools lose any more money then students who are attending them are less likely to get a good quality education. This will negatively impact students like myself and my brother and sister.

I have attended Finneytown my whole life and have formed some great friendships here. The community is amazing and, because we are a small school, you know a lot of people that come from different places. I have friends from the Philippines, Mexico and Nepal. It is truly amazing to have this diverse of a school. I don't notice this type of diversity at private schools in our area. I think having diversity in our school teaches students how to live in the real world – our world is a global world that includes people of all backgrounds.

I am involved in many activities that include color guard, swimming and theater. I have made so many different friends from all of these activities. I know people who have been able to play soccer and participate in marching band at the same time. Our school has one of the best marching bands in our area. Our school has minimal fees for marching band students because many would not have money to participate otherwise. Our props and uniforms are done on a shoestring budget, which mostly consists of donations, as compared to the outrageous budgets of other large schools in our area. However, if some of our school's funding was forced to be sent to private schools then I wonder if we would even have enough money to support our band teachers? This could take away one of my favorite activities at school. Music is proven to impact a lot of different areas of a student's life.

Theater has taught me hard work and how to be a leader. It has also taught me how to deal with conflict when you are working together to achieve a goal. These opportunities we have at our school that may not exist if you force our school to use local dollars to pay for vouchers. I don't think it is fair for hard-working families to pay local tax dollars for education only for the state to force their money to be sent to private schools.

In addition to the extra-curricular activities, teachers are like mentors to some of the students and they help students in school that don't get support at home. One example of this is that my math teacher stays after school to help kids with homework if they need it. My school has also formed a house system trying to build community and embrace diversity in our school. Part of the goal of the house system is to also provide support for students that may not have support at home.

In summary, please provide more funding, not less for our public schools. The students in our state deserve better public schools with increased funding. Taking away funding will not improve public schools or the outcome for students and our future. Instead of taking away funding from public schools, shouldn't you consider how you can improve them and provide better opportunities for students to learn within public schools? Thank you for your time.