

Chair Jones, Members of the Committee, thank you for permitting me to testify before you today. I never thought I would be testifying before a legislative committee. I also never thought we would be where we are with EdChoice either. However, this is such an important issue for my family that it warranted the drive from Toledo this afternoon.

I am a parent of two children that are currently attending a public school. This school is rated "D" on the current School Report Card. It is currently on the Designated School list and remains on the revised list HB 9 that cuts the eligible schools down to 425.

We had made the decision to send our children to a public school knowing the EdChoice program was in place and we could utilize it if we needed too. We decided that there are other schools that are a better fit and learning environment for our Children. We applied to a new school and have been accepted to that school. We operated in good faith by what the legislature had passed and the Ohio Department of Education had implemented.

We all know what happened. At the 11th hour, the rug was pulled out from under families, many that had already made life altering decisions. As Senator Roegner stated on the floor last week, the State did not keep its promise. I am asking you to allow the State to keep its promise to Ohio families like mine.

I am in favor of an EdChoice program like what is proposed in HB 9 with performance and income-based vouchers.

There are families that are currently living in areas with a Public School that is not performing well. Those families should not be forced to move to attend a better performing school. With those families that are able to moving to better performing districts, that will have a negative effect on vulnerable neighborhoods. There are families living in a neighborhood due to the State's promise of EdChoice performance-based vouchers. The State needs to keep its promise with them.

It can be said that the grade card system is not perfect, and that it should be revised. Then lets start that discussion and not hold those families who are operating under what the Legislature had passed hostage while that is debated. Schools should remain rated to provide incentive for them to improve.

I am also in favor of an income-based program as well. However, this needs to include a higher income level than what the house has proposed, and also include a sliding scale for first-time applicants. In SB 89 that the house proposed the income level was 250% of the Poverty Level or \$65,500 for a family of four. If a family made \$65,501 they would be eligible for nothing. This is too low and needs to be what the Senate has proposed and along with a sliding scale to accommodate families that are earning slightly more. The current EdChoice Expansion only has a sliding scale once you are accepted into the program with a lower income. That needs to change and be in place for first time applicants.

Thank you for your time and for scheduling these committee meetings. I am happy to address any questions you may have.