

Good evening,

First of all thank you so much for the time and opportunity to be able to speak to you this evening with regards to HB9 and the EdChoice Voucher program. I stand here today as a high school graduate of public education in Ohio, the daughter of two public school teachers and the parent of current public school students. HB9 as it currently stands, is a blatant attack on public schools AND tax paying citizens of the state of Ohio. Not only would it send an exponential amount of tax dollars to private schools (more than the per pupil spending in the public school) that are not held accountable OR to the same standards as public schools, but it sends money to parochial schools of which not all people have the same beliefs and have no choice as to which private school those dollars go to.

But I am not here to explain the bill, of which I am sure many of you are well versed on at this point. I am here to make a plea to reconsider the structure in which this bill has been made. As many people have stated the current report card rating in the state of Ohio is unfair, unmanageable and changes faster than anyone can keep up with. It fails to consider and recognize the ESL children that public schools support, the challenging children that public schools support who may not have support at home, the special needs children that public schools support, and many other emotional and social needs that public schools support. So instead of our tax dollars going to a system with checks and balances in the public schools, we will send it away to schools where no standards are held by the state at all and many children can get overlooked. Exclusion criteria exists in the way this bill currently stands and our tax dollars were not meant to exclude!

As a young girl growing up I watched both of my parents work tirelessly for the children in their classrooms. Both of my parents, Columbus Public School teachers, of which one a special education teacher, not only work but CARE for these children, utilizing minimal resources, often utilizing their own money and extra time to give EVERY SINGLE child the same experience! I send my children off to school each day with teachers that I continue to be in awe of. These teachers, students and staff deserve the resources and ability to give our PUBLIC Education system a fighting chance for all that's needed to foster and develop our future. HB9 stands to take a huge chunk out of that, and make us as tax paying citizens pay MORE for schools that are held to no little or no standard.

It is sad and unfair the way that schools are funded in this state, that is an argument for another day, but today I urge you to use those funds that we do have as best as we can to provide our PUBLIC SCHOOLS the funds they need and reconsider the new version of this bill that is being presented. The EdChoice program attacks what little funding public schools have for schools that ARE excelling despite the report card in the state of Ohio. I URGE you to reconsider for all of our children in Ohio and our tax paying citizens.

Respectfully,  
Rachel Crites