

Good evening Chairman Jones and Conference Committee Members... Today, I come in front of this body as a public school board member championing for students of public education against the expansion of the Ed Choice voucher. I represent Washington Local Schools from Toledo in Lucas County. I am proud to say that I'm a Whitmer High School graduate. Post-secondary, I earned two graduate degrees... a Master in Health Administration and Master of Science in Nursing. Currently, I work as a Clinical Nursing Director at a renowned university health system. In addition, I'm entering my third year as a Washington Local School Board Member with past responsibilities as being Board Vice President as well as President.

My wife and I made the commitment to send all of our children to Washington Local Schools from kindergarten through graduation. Our last child is a freshman at Whitmer High School. Our two oldest are in college. My daughter is a junior pursuing middle school education who has been on the Dean's List throughout her college career. My son, who graduated last year, finished ninth in his graduating class from Whitmer and was accepted into his college program of civil engineering as an entering freshman. Based on a faulty grade card system, that this body of legislation is utilizing as a "litmus test" to determine the expansion of Ed Choice and to classify a school or school district as "failing;" my children should be in academic distress. In fact, based on established metrics this legislation wants to utilize as a benchmark, my children "should not" have advanced past their educational careers in Washington Local and never made it into college, let alone displaying success at the colligate level.

As for my daughter in high school, she has been on an IEP throughout her years in Washington Local. The services she has been provided has helped her reach the honor roll status.

Last week, I voted to have earmarked wellness dollars moved into the general fund to reduce deficit spending and protect our bond rating, as we prepare to build new schools after a successful levy and bond campaign. Our voters passed that levy for Washington Local Schools...not for Ed Choice vouchers.

Washington Local is a capped school district losing \$14 million per year under an identified unconstitutional school funding structure by the Ohio Supreme Court. Adding insult to injury, we now have the risk of Ed Choice dollars being taken from our district as well.

Based on a faulty grade card system and a potential significant expansion of the Ed Choice voucher, Washington Local Schools will be crippled if a majority vote is decided to "turn backs" on public education. Sadly, most of the children utilizing vouchers in private schools in our local community, have far worse standardized test scores than our own Washington Local students.

I don't stand in front of you voicing against parent's choice where they decide to educate their children. I stand in front of you requesting that all children in public education have a fair and equal opportunity to receive the appropriate funding they deserve to reach his or her utmost potential. Please do not force school districts to ration services and educational opportunities by deciding "food over medicine."

Thank you for your time. I'll take any question you may have for me.