

Chairman Jones and members of the House Bill 9 Conference Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Ohio's EdChoice Voucher program. I would also like to thank you for your efforts to limit the harm that the proposed expansion of EdChoice would bring to public schools across Ohio. My name is Trisha Roy and I am an alumna of the Shaker Heights City School District, currently in my second year at the Ohio State University. 10 years ago, my parents made the decision to move us into Shaker Heights, as my mom is a teacher at the high school and wanted my brother and I to have the education and access to resources that she and her colleagues provided to their students every day. My school district prior to Shaker was predominantly white, which often caused me to question my own identity as a person of color. The diversity in Shaker Schools, paired with the enthusiastic welcome and constant support I received, helped me grow into the person I am today. From excitedly coming here to Columbus in middle school for Science Olympiad States, to graduating with my International Baccalaureate Diploma, the support from Shaker was the backbone of my experiences.

Expanding the voucher program would cause schools like Shaker a financial crisis. Basing these expansions off of arbitrarily graded report cards and creating a list of schools that is deemed to be failing is demoralizing and works against the idea to create stronger public schools. In order for the Shaker City Schools to continue to achieve at such a high level and foster an environment where many improvements can be made, we should be adequately funding them and not draining money from public school districts. I am currently a double major and am a part of the Eminence Fellowship Program, which is the most prestigious merit-based scholarship offered to 20 incoming freshmen at Ohio State. As highly competitive as this program is, Shaker has had a fellow in almost every class for the past 6 years, which is a rarity across private and public schools. I could not have ended up where I am without the Shaker City Schools and urge the representatives here today to see the incredible value that public schools have to offer.

Public education is the foundation of our society and causing schools to shoulder a huge financial burden and inhibiting their growth will be detrimental to the five thousand children that are learning in Shaker schools right now. I am proudly a product of the Shaker Heights City School District and hope that hearing my testimony will encourage you to support schools like my alma mater and help build up public education through freezing EdChoice expansion until a less damaging plan is created. Thank you for this opportunity to speak, I would be happy to answer any questions.