

MY STORY

BY ADAN RAMOS

Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Ohio House Education and Career Readiness Committee. Thank you for taking the time today to hear House Bill 200 and to listen to my story about school choice. It has been a great blessing coming to Ohio and finding out about school choice programs. I had never imagined the EdChoice scholarship would make the difference it already has. I used to live in a small town in North Carolina, and I was raising my kids in the best possible way. Yet somehow I knew I needed to seek out a better education for them so I decided to move to Ohio.

When I arrived to Columbus, back in 2012, I registered my children in the local school. I knew they had some issues but I couldn't do anything about it, or so I thought, other than support the school as much possible. It was in April of 2013 when looking through my mail that I saw a letter from **School Choice Ohio** and read about the opportunity my family had to get access to a better education. The deadline was only two days away. I called the number listed there and they told me that as long as the private school accepted **Ed Choice** and my kids, I was able to send my applications in to get the scholarship. I immediately applied, and to my good fortune the school that I wanted my girls to go to was accepting new kids and also the **EdChoice Program**.

I was so grateful to find out that my first two girls were accepted. They were enrolled at **Eastwood Junior Academy**, a place that I knew they were going to learn a lot. Not only academically, but to also be good citizens with great manners.

They love their school. They love to help me share information on the scholarships so more kids can go to school with them. As friends and family move from different states, I like to help them be part of school choice and get them the help they need to choose the best education for their children.

From the moment they enrolled to today, we have helped over 15 families with all their needs. Always trying to have the most current information at hand, many of the great people that work at **School Choice Ohio** are very helpful and have demonstrated their interest in our needs.

Many parents have shared their worries about their children's school location. Especially, and sadly, because of the danger of gangs being too close to the school. It brings fear and a sensation of not being safe at the school. I experienced this situation myself when my girls were going to their assigned school. Almost every week we received a letter from the principal explaining why such incidents had happened on their premises. Many times we'd see officers and patrols around the school.

That's why I can happily refer my daughter's school, or many others schools, that they can take their loved ones to. It is a **blessing** to be able to look for something better for our kids.

When I decided to buy a house, I looked for a house that I knew in advance would be able to qualify for the aid that **school choice** offers. So I did my homework so I could buy a house that allowed me to have school choice for my 3 girls.

I wish more parents were able to get the help and aid that I received. Sadly, some of the parents that I know are not able to qualify for the scholarships, only because of where they live. And they are not able to get **school choice options or a scholarship**. Many families apply for the Income-Based Scholarship, which they see as their only option. They applied a few times and didn't receive one, but they still feel it is worth to keep trying.

House Bill 200 will help these families that have been turned away from these scholarships and give them the same opportunities I have been blessed with.

Finally, I do not know what I would do without this scholarship that **School Choice** offers. My kids can't thank enough all those who were involved in this great labor of creating school choice, because I know it takes courage and effort, but families like mine are willing to stay put and to support in all ways possible so more families can have access to these programs.

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to my testimony and for supporting parents so they can get a better education for their kids, which are the next generation of this great country. May God bless you all. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Adan Ramos