

October 7, 2017

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 200

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Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby , Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for giving me a chance to comment today in support of HB 200. If I may, I have two points that highlight the impact the EdChoice scholarship has had on my family.

As a mother of three young boys growing up in our current society, you can imagine where my concerns are focused: Who will influence my children?

Our children are growing up in an incredibly fast paced society with a culture of information overload. Easily navigational technology and information of every sort is literally at the hands of toddlers. While this creates massive improvements in education, it really changes the meaning of “working with your hands.” I am noticing the need to stimulate and motivate our children is very great. You see my husband and I run our own artisan bakery. It’s both of our full time jobs. It’s very important to us to show our sons how to work hard and find success in starting from scratch, as opposed to success being handed to them. We wanted the opportunity to homeschool, but the demands of our job leaves us little room to have our kids around us 24/7. We tried public school for a few years and it was a nightmare for us. Detentions, suspensions, expulsions were a constant. Extra curricular parenting classes and programs were implemented in our household, but I worried the punishments at school, while valid, were only exacerbating the situation. I researched and found Immanuel School right in my hometown, and they immediately welcomed me, connecting me with the EdChoice scholarship. Wow!! I was actually able to send my kids to private school, despite our household income!! We are very happy business owners in our growing downtown city, able to show our boys every day the importance of hard work. I don't think we would be as successful if the issues at school maintained down the public school path. This is our second year at Immanuel Lutheran School and any problems my boys have had in public school have since been vanquished. The school is much smaller than the oversized, understaffed public schools

in my city. There is one classroom per grade, giving teachers the ability to focus more on the children. The stress of school is non-existent now that our three sons are at Immanuel Lutheran School. It would not be possible for us to send our sons to this school if it wasn't for the EdChoice scholarship.

Not only do I care about the attention my sons are receiving, I care about who influences them, which brings me to my second and final point. It means a lot to my family that they go to Immanuel Lutheran School, as we hold strong Christian and Biblical values in our home. Recently I communicated with the pastor, principal, and certain staff about my relationship concerns between the children. The faculty echoes my parenting techniques, which does my heart wonders. I know I leave my sons in wonderful, caring hands while my husband and I run our business during the day. We are able to happily and thankfully serve our community, and we know members of our community are serving us. I believe we should all do our part to care for our children.

To quote Fred Rogers, "We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."