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May 18, 2018

Good morning Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, ranking member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Dr. Joseph Beeson. I am currently the Superintendent of Lake Center Christian School in Hartville, Ohio.

I am here in opposition of SB 241.

I will allow my colleague to share details of our school, though I can say our PreK-12th grade school is celebrating its 70th year, serves over 600 students, and reflects the academic, racial, and socio-economic diversity of our community which includes Stark, Summit, and Portage counties as well as over 130 congregations in Northeast Ohio.

My experience in education spans over forty years. Most of those years have been in Ohio schools. I served on one of the first committees to work on the Ohio proficiency test as well as on the former "bias review committee" for the Ohio Graduation Test.

My relevant experience in relation to this bill has to do with my service with international schools. For eleven years I was the head of school for private schools in both Singapore and South Korea. I also served two years on the board of the East Asia Regional Council of Schools, an organization which represents 158 member schools, over 14,000 teachers and administrators and over 132,000 students. I have chaired committees to accredit international schools with both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Association of Christian Schools International. Finally, as a member of the Korea Foreign Schools Foundation, I visited leading international schools in Mumbai, India; Bangkok, Thailand; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Hong Kong.

One major lesson learned from my experience with these schools is that when given the opportunity, private schools will excel in the areas of innovation and commitment to student learning. In the arena of private education, schools are forced to offer the best education possible lest the "rule of supply and demand" result in their inability to continue operating.

The chartering process for the state of Ohio already sets the necessary limits for protection of children and for their minimum educational requirements. Adding a group of "Accredited Non-public Schools," puts the state in a position of judging which criteria really identify a school as being excellent. However, excellence is a measurement that each school sets for itself and is measured by its constituents decision to remain a part of that school. For those with sectarian beliefs, their definition of excellence may differ significantly from the excellence as defined by a non-sectarian school.

All your children shall be taught by the LORD; and great shall be the peace of your children. - Isaiah 54:13

Overall, every school I encountered while serving overseas had different measures for excellence. Yet within their own definition, they were innovative, committed to student learning, and committed to finding out from the research what was best for students. I believe to disadvantage schools by not allowing them to be a part of the state defined "accredited non-public schools," will hinder their ability to serve more parents and students.

Therefore, I ask each of you to refrain from supporting this bill or ask that a series of interested party hearings are held to allow all accredited nonpublic chartered school to be represented in this pilot program.

Chairwoman Lehner and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as an opponent of SB 241.

At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions.