



## Written Testimony on H.B. 110

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding H.B. 110.

My name is Jacob Bush and I am the principal and administrator at Celeryville Christian School located just south of Willard in Huron County. My role as a school leader is a humbling position. I began my career as a special needs educator at the secondary level in Mount Vernon City Schools, not too far from where we sit today. I held that post for several years and learned a great deal about the needs of individual students and the impact that education has on their lives. My journey in education took a surprising turn when I walked in the doors of Celeryville eight years ago to lead the organization. I was a naïve 26 year old with a tremendous amount of passion but very little knowledge of what I was actually charged to do.

Over these past eight years, I have grown into my position. I have leaned on the variety of experiences that I had growing up in a public education setting, working in a public educational institution myself, and engaging my colleagues who work in the public and private schools to inform my work as the leader of Celeryville Christian School. I have learned a great deal about leadership, education, meeting the needs of our staff, students, and families, and how education, at its core, is the opportunity to touch each individual life in a positive manner. With those items in mind, I believe that it is crucial for us to give every possible opportunity to our children to engage in a life-defining experience as they grow through their educational journey.

Regardless of the format, each school has the opportunity to have this life-defining impact on Ohio's students. We work diligently to meet the needs of each of our families and hope to build a foundation from which our students will be able to thrive. Giving each student and family the opportunity to do that where they would like, in a place that best fits their needs and desires, is a wonderful gift that Ohio has bestowed upon our parents, students, and families. Access to school choice is not a degrading of one and lifting up of the other; but rather, it is an opportunity for families to choose the school that they believe will have the greatest life-defining impact on their student.

As you consider furthering legislation for school choice, there are several considerations to be made to allow our Ohio families the opportunity to choose. I have walked some very difficult paths with families over these years as we have patiently waited for an answer regarding scholarships and awards, concern over the scholarship program ceasing to exist, and the tough conversations with those who do not qualify by just a few dollars. In contrast, I have spent countless hours working with families to navigate the scholarship process and have shared in the jubilation when families realize that they are accepted and able to access that life-defining education that they so fervently want for their children.

The authority to remedy those concerns rests with this body and we have placed our trust in you to answer the call for our Ohio students and families who desire to choose.

I was reluctant to share my own personal story because it is long. However, it will give insight into the challenges that our families face when determining what is best for their child. My wife and I have four beautiful daughters, two that attend our local public school, one that is enrolled in private school, and one that will attend private school soon. This may sound like an odd combination, but each of our children is different, has different needs, and my wife and I share different, yet respectable, opinions regarding education. Having scholarships available has given us the opportunity to make individual choices for our children regarding their schooling. Despite those challenging decisions, we are at peace about the decisions that we have made for our children and trust that each of the institutions that they are engaging in will hold the life-defining moments that they get to impact in high regard.

As a resident and educator in this great state, I appreciate what Ohio has committed to regarding school choice. Improvements can always be made, much like I learned my last eight years. Thank you all for your commitment to improve our scholarship programming through greater funding, greater opportunity, and greater impact. Your decisions are a direct reflection on your desire to have that life-defining impact on the children of Ohio.

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding H.B. 110.

I will do my best to answer any questions that you might have.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jacob Bush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mr. Jacob Bush