

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 03/13/2023

Name: Logan Tolliver

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

Organization (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: Delphos St. John's Student

Address: 1541 N Cole St.

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 11

Specific Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes  No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? roughly 2-3 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position: I will be reading a letter my mother wrote on behalf of our family in support of School Choice and House Bill 11.

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*



Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler, Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and Honorable Members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 11, also known as the Backpack Bill.

My name is Logan Tolliver and I live in Lima, Ohio. I am expressing my support of the Backpack Bill today. I am reading this on behalf of my mother, Jessica, who could not be here today.

Our family lives in a public school district where our 6 children attended for many years. As time progressed, the situation became very unhealthy to our children educationally, physically, mentally. We began looking for open enrollment options with no luck. So many area schools were not accepting open enrollment due to in-district numbers. We did 2 years of researching on where to send our children for the best and most safe option for them to obtain their education. We couldn't afford private schooling with our income ratio to family size, but we still researched them.

During our research, we discovered Delphos St. John's. They had an open house for families interested in their school. Myself, My husband and all of our children were able to come meet the principals, some of the current families, and other new potential families. We loved the atmosphere and warm welcoming of the staff and community. Knowing we weren't able to afford the tuition, this was our first question to administration. They informed us about EdChoice and EdChoice Expansion opportunities to help with tuition assistance. Without the help from the staff and the state of Ohio offering the expansion, we would have never been able to bring our kids to such a nice environmental change.

Being able to send our children to St. John's has been such a blessing. They have such a caring and positive learning environment. The staff are all so friendly and personable with every student in the building. Before we were officially enrolled and accepted Mr. Nathan Stant, the elementary principal, would frequently check in on our kids and how they were doing while finishing their year at the public school and online learning due to covid. This compassion made our decision even easier to choose the private Catholic education. Our elementary secretary Mrs. Cathy Suever has been heaven sent helping us and other families step by step through the EdChoice process and renewal process each year. Having our children learn about the Catholic religion and attend mass is something they have enjoyed doing and are even able to participate in despite not being Catholic. Our children and ourselves are always included and have never felt left out. Our children are cared for, safe, and challenged and assisted in all the right ways academically from the elementary to the high school. Delphos St. John's took action to assist with an IMAP (Individualized Minor Adjustment Plan) for our child who struggles. They took immediate action for our child who excels in placing him in advance courses. Being able to feel so loved and part of a family in the school setting would not be possible without the EdChoice option. We no longer fear for our children's education or safety.

I, Jessica, have been able to volunteer at the school with cafeteria assistance, the mom's room (Nurses office) for basic care, and even substitute teaching. This year I have been able to become an Aide to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students who have IEP's. Again, all these changes are thanks to EdChoice giving us the opportunity to join the Blue Jay family.

We feel so many families go without knowing the option of the help that is available. There are so many kids who are left behind and struggling the way our children did, or worse, because their parents are unaware that there is funding available to help their child earn a private education. The

assistance from the EdChoice and EdChoice expansion scholarship has opened so much for our family. We advocate to the best of our abilities to those researching and struggling to find the opportunities for their children that we have been blessed with to file for EdChoice after their private education selection.

No child, no family should ever have to struggle to provide an environment of safety, care, and quality education because they feel they can't afford it. We can never express our gratitude for the opportunities provided by our school choice of Delphos St. John's and the EdChoice expansion. We feel all families deserve the same love, education, and compassion opportunities for their children despite their income, and House Bill 11 would give all families this opportunity. The future of children should always come first.

Mrs. Jessica Tolliver and  
The Tolliver Family