

My name is Walter Blanks Jr and I'm a proud born and raised buckeye. I spent the first 24 years of my life in Columbus it has been a joy seeing the growth and opportunities in this state. I mostly grew up in the inner city. Surrounded by poverty, crime, and low expectations. I was in a different school almost every single year and teachers would often write me off before I even stepped foot in the school. I was severely bullied with no way out.

One day after having a bloody nose and ripped clothes, the principal of my school told my mother "If you give us five years, we would have this middle school and the high school turned around". My mother looked at him and said "In five years, Walter will either be in jail or in a body bag." Thanks to the Edchoice Scholarship Program I was able to attend a small private school where my education journey flourished. I spent the next 7 years exploring and being exposed to things far beyond anything I could have dreamed. I played sports, performed in musicals, and fell into the Seine River in Europe with one of my best friends.

School choice gave me an opportunity to live a better life. After graduating high school and college (which statically was not the expectation), I moved to DC and began advocating for students to have the same freedom I did. I firmly believe every parent should be empowered to make the best decision for their children. I support HB 11 and truly believe it will have a positive impact on students as well as the entire state of Ohio.

Thank you