

Hello ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jessica Bertling. I am a wife to Marine Corps Veteran, Cory Bertling, and a mother of four: Elias(10), Everett(8), Juliet(4) and Callia(2). We are a typical Ohio family, who love sports, music, playing games and pranks, and laughing until we cry.

Before I go on, I would like to talk about what a week looks like in our house based on time spent together. In our house, our children get around 10-12 hours of sleep each night; that is 70-84 hours per week. They also attend school or a babysitter for 7-8 hours per weekday, that is 35 to 40 hours each week. Together, Cory and I work 80+ hours a week. That leaves us with approximately 3 - 5 hours each weeknight to spend with our kids. We do not work on weekends so that we can put our children first. However, our children still spend more time at school or with a babysitter than they do with us.

We have a choice of what apps/games they use, whose house they go to, what they eat and the list goes on. Why should that stop with the choice of what school we think they should attend or the type of education we want them to receive? Without school choice programs, we would not be able to afford the Catholic education that our children are receiving today.

School Choice and House Bill 11 allow a plethora of families to select the best education option for their children based on their unique needs, interests, and values. Catholic education is one such option that provides a strong academic foundation while also emphasizing the importance of faith, character, and community.

Our school, Delphos St. John's, like many Catholic schools, prioritizes the whole person's development, including intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual growth. Students are taught to think critically, communicate effectively, and become active and responsible citizens. They also receive a values-based education that emphasizes the importance of compassion, service, and social justice.

Furthermore, Delphos St. John's offers a safe and nurturing environment where students can thrive academically and personally. The smaller class sizes and individualized attention from teachers allow for personalized instruction and support, while the Catholic community provides a sense of belonging and a support network for students and families. Our teachers, administrators, and students act as one large family.

Overall, House Bill 11 can provide even more families with an opportunity to choose what form of education equips each individual student with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to succeed academically and personally, and to make a positive impact on the world around them. I hope you seriously consider voting yes for House Bill 11, not only for my children: Elias, Everett, Juliet and Callia, but for all students in Ohio who deserve to learn in an educational environment that best fits their personal needs, regardless of cost. Thank you and God bless.