

House Bill 11: Opposition Testimony  
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
April 25, 2023

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Committee: Hello, my name is Christopher Monteiro, and I'm an English teacher at Northland High School in Columbus City Schools. I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to House Bill 11's expansion of student vouchers, which only serves to drain public resources and subsidize private education for the wealthy who can already afford it.

The voucher plan may seem like it opens the door for families to choose private schools, but in reality, private schools are not equipped to accommodate every public student, and they can choose to keep the door closed as they see fit. Furthermore, they can choose to raise tuition at any time, pricing out the students this program is meant to help. Private schools will continue to serve the populations who already use them while rejecting the vast majority of Ohio's students. Only 10% of Ohio's eligible students even attend private schools; the other 90% require a fully funded public education. The best option for the majority of our state is obviously to put public dollars towards public goods, and therefore towards public education.

The cost of this plan is also enormous. The fiscal note on this bill estimates \$1.1 billion per year just for the students who currently attend private schools without any government assistance. Why should Ohio's taxpayers foot the bill for private, often religious, education with zero oversight? Public schools have a legal obligation to serve all Ohio students with developmentally appropriate pedagogy and to use public dollars as efficiently as possible for that purpose. School boards face accountability in their elections and must demonstrate their good-faith execution of the public's will. Private school administrations, even with state funding, face no public accountability whatsoever, nor do they have an obligation to the public.

Even worse, homeschools and non-chartered private schools would receive voucher funding. This very year, journalists uncovered and verified the existence of a Nazi homeschooling network in Ohio. If this bill passes, public dollars would pay for neo-Nazis to educate children as they see fit. It's horrible enough that our institutions have no oversight for these groups, but for public funding to subsidize their vitriol would be beyond the pale.

Rather than wasting taxpayer money on subsidies for the rich, our policymakers need to improve our public schools by fully implementing the Fair School Funding Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition; I urge a "no" vote on House Bill 11.