



Representative Gayle Manning

HB 407

Sponsor Testimony

April 23, 2024

Chair Bird, Vice-Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 407, which would assist parents in decision making by bringing transparency and reasonable accountability measures to Ohio's EdChoice scholarship program.

The recent expansion of the EdChoice scholarship program in HB 33 granted parents and students in Ohio the opportunity to take control over their education and allow parents to decide the best form of learning for their child. With this influx in student participation and state investment, there needs to be some additional guidelines and transparency provided to parents so they can truly make the most informed decision possible. The goal of HB 407 is to give parents student performance, demographic, and disciplinary information and ensure state tax dollars are being spent properly. In this way, parents will be provided with the best possible information when planning their child's education.

According to the Legislative Service Commission, the scholarship program in Ohio this year has cost taxpayers \$412



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million. Because of the interest in scholarships to attend chartered non-public schools, growth is expected to continue, and more state tax dollars will be invested. The state of Ohio is expected to spend \$2 billion on across all 5 scholarship programs over the next two years. To ensure the focus of the scholarship system remains on Ohio's youth, schools accepting scholarship students should be transparent about how these funds are being spent.

To best craft this legislation, we looked at what national leaders, such as Florida and Arizona, are doing to provide the best possible programs for parents. Florida, which has the largest school choice program in the country, requires all schools accepting voucher dollars to administer either the state or national assessment. Arizona's school choice program has been around for over a decade and requires that all scholarship accounts are subject to annual audits. We had several IP meetings including, OASBO, BASA, OSBA, OEA, OFT, Fordham, Ed. Choice, Catholic Conference, LSC, and DEW, to discover the types of accountability measures that would work best for Ohio.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today and will take any questions following Rep. Seitz testimony.



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