

HB 440 Written Proponent Testimony  
Pamela Kelley  
Concerned Parent  
May 28, 2024

Chairman Manning, Sponsor Representative Fowler Arthur, Sponsor Representative Lear, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to write to you today in support of House Bill 440. My name is Pam Kelley and I am the parent of a child with special needs, who receives scholarship dollars through the Ohio Autism Scholarship.

We are extremely grateful to the State of Ohio for providing scholarship dollars to assist us in meeting the educational needs of our son, that our home district in Stark County was unable to meet. We are also extremely grateful that these services have been able to be delivered remotely.

During the pandemic and immediately following, our son fell several grade levels below where he should have been academically. We had no choice but to resort to homeschooling and seek out the services of an academic tutor. For the last 3 years, he has made leaps and bounds in catching up and we owe that to the in person **AND REMOTE** academic services that his intervention specialist and teachers have provided. My son has thrived under the one-on-one tutoring services that are provided and removing this service from him would seriously affect his ability to continue to thrive and learn from the tutors who have been paired up with him based on their ability to meet the academic need stemming from his disability.

It is important to know that these amazing teachers and intervention specialists serve many students in various counties and they are only able to do this because they work remotely. It would not be possible for them to drive to meet each student in their home or in a central location. It also is not always possible for parents to travel. Many parents in our homeschool community who benefit from these remote services have several children and their needs can only be met remotely due to schedules and health issues.

These remote services have been provided to families for the past 4 years and removing them would be devastating academically for the children who receive these special needs scholarships. I can hardly imagine that the state intends to discriminate against some students by denying them access to the same level of academics that other students receive and will continue to receive.

I urge you to support house bill 440 and to do so immediately so there is not a gap in the delivery of remote services for these scholarship recipients. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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