

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: March 13, 2023

Name: Ashton Beverly

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Ross County Christian Academy

Position/Title: Student

Address: 84 S. Clinton Rd.

City: Chillicothe State: Ohio Zip: 45601

Best Contact Telephone: (740) 701-5514 Email: ashtonbeverly777@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business _____ before _____ the _____ committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 11

Specific Issue: Backpack Bill

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Approximately Three-Five Minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position: See attached. I would like to provide a brief statement in favor of the Backpack Bill.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Good afternoon Chair Richardson, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and members of the Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education. My name is Ashton Beverly. I am a seventeen year old senior at Ross County Christian Academy. Ross County Christian Academy is a private, Christian charter school located in Chillicothe, Ohio; I have been a student there for the past thirteen years of my life (ever since kindergarten). I'm extraordinarily thankful that my family has been able to provide my three siblings and I with the opportunity to go to that school, and my hope is that other children will soon be afforded that same opportunity with the passing of House Bill 11.

During the first several years that I attended my school, my family paid full tuition while at the same time paying taxes to our public school, not seeing a single penny of the federal money allotted to me. At the time, it wasn't an issue for my family as we've been blessed with the means to afford such a type of schooling, thankfully; however, this simply isn't the case for many families. The fact that the public school system receives the money of all those who pursue a method of education contrary to it is an injustice toward all those affected, my family included. The majority of people in my community in Appalachian, Southern Ohio can't afford the option of alternate methods of education in the first place. With this being the case, I know for a fact that the proposed Backpack Bill would do a world of good for those in my local area that aren't afforded the opportunity for options in terms of their education.

Thankfully, due to the EdChoice program, my three siblings and I have been able to attend Ross County Christian Academy under scholarship. Our home district's elementary school was failing on the state report card and that entitled us to a scholarship. My family does well financially, but it would be untruthful to say that this exception didn't help our family out in

sending the four of us to the school we attend. Unfortunately, many other families aren't as fortunate in this case.

The simple reality is that many families wish that they had the means to send their children to a school outside of what's being federally provided (whether that be a private school or homeschool). However, these families are unable to do so because of the cost of sending their kids to said schools and other factors. At the same time, these families do not qualify for any of the current exceptions to this reality. House Bill 11 will provide every K-12 student with a scholarship and the option of alternate methods of schooling would ultimately become more feasible and affordable for those who are interested. Thank you so much for your time, and I hope that you consider making this change to our education system in favor of school choice.

*If asked a question, begin with, "*Through the chair, to the representative, . . .*"