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SB 11  
Parent Education Freedom Act  
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Chairperson Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Ingram, and committee members:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about SB 11.

My name is Tera Myers, and I am here to today as a mother in support of SB 11 because every parent, regardless of geographical location, deserves the choice of where their child is educated.

I know the difficulties of navigating the current education system and being left with a “one size fits all system” of education. Fortunately for my children and me, our legislature saw the need to offer choice when our district school was deemed failing and again when we worked hard to provide for students like my son who have exceptional learning needs with the passage of the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship. Today I still ask, “why not every parent of every student?” SB 11 would be a step in the right direction for this problem.

Many people ask why I still urge education freedom for all students long after my children have gone on to graduate not only k-12 but also college. My response is easy, “no family should ever have to settle for a program that is not working for their children, regardless of the reasons.” I remember all too well how hard we tried to make our public program work for all of our children. I also remember my six-year-old daughter being afraid to get out of the car in the morning at school for

fear of being bullied by the boys that had been taunting her for days. I remember the principal telling me to “toughen her up” and “have her get over it” both options were utterly ridiculous. The Ed Choice scholarship offered a solution for my daughters to be educated in an environment that was safe, academically appropriate, and morally aligned with our family’s values. All three of our children have become well-educated, productive members of society. I am certain that the choice programs they were afforded made this possible. Every parent should be able to choose the best education setting for their children.

I was told that by supporting school choice, I would be personally responsible for the collapse of our current public school system and that we would cause financial failure. Though I was flattered by the assumption that I had that much power, I knew that in every area of our culture, choices by our citizens only made the competition better. It remains true that after 20 years since my family supported Ed Choice, not one public system has collapsed. Several of our local districts have risen to the challenge and offered better programs for the students that attend them.

Education Freedom isn’t about an “us against them” idea. It merely allows the citizens to make choices for the most valuable commodity in our society, the children. Children are our future, and parents are the best suited to decide where a student will best learn. When families can easily make these decisions, it creates unity, collaboration, and commitment. Sometimes parents even need to change course because circumstances have changed. There is no good reason to disallow a student to be eligible for the best education possible. Ohio has gotten it right so many times in the recent past. We have enacted robust opportunity, and this bill is one step closer to closing the gap for all of

Ohio's students. While it doesn't close the gap entirely by offering full freedom for homeschooling families and non-charter, nonpublic schools, it is a step in the right direction. I know that the members of this committee and the legislature of our great state want to do what is right for our children, which is why I have taken the time to speak with you today. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story and thoughts; I am happy to answer any questions you may have.