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*Advocating for Life, Faith, and Freedom in the Public Square*

To: Members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee  
From: Chris Long, President Ohio Christian Alliance  
Re: Supporting Testimony S.B. 11

I would like to thank Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee for receiving our testimony today in support of S.B. 11, The Parent Educational Freedom Act, legislation that will expand the current EdChoice Scholarship program to give eligibility to all students in the State of Ohio, and would expand the current homeschool tax credit from \$250 to \$2,000. The newly expanded EdChoice Scholarship would provide \$5,500 for students in grades K-8 and \$7,500 for students in grades 9-12. This money can be used at any public, community, or chartered non-public school in Ohio.

This legislation is long overdue. Educational choice options should benefit all of Ohio's students, not just a few. Parents should have options for the best educational paths for their children. S.B. 11, the Parent Educational Freedom Act, would empower the parents to choose the best educational option for their child, whether that is charter school, homeschool, or public school.

Arizona and Utah have passed similar legislation and have had success with this program. Still other states are lining up to move forward with this style of educational choice for their students. Ohio school children need to benefit from this new educational choice program as quickly as possible.

As Governor DeWine outlined in his recent State of the State Address, 40% of Ohio's school children are not reading at their grade level. We have an educational crisis in Ohio right now. The school shutdowns during the pandemic have caused our students to fall behind, and graduation rates in the next few years are projected to be alarmingly low in some communities.

S.B. 11 is bold action, but we need to take bold action, as emergency measures are needed to get our students back on track. Opening the door for educational choice on a broader scale is the remedy needed to mitigate the current educational crisis in Ohio due to the pandemic shutdowns. To do less is to fail our students, and that is unacceptable.

S.B. 11 also is cost effective. These additional school options can, in most cases, operate below the cost of current public education.

On a personal note, my wife and I raised eight children, and chose a variety of educational options. We homeschooled all the children at an early age to lay the foundation for their education. We then chose a combination of charter school, private school, and public schools. Every step of the way it was our choice for our children's education, but when we chose homeschooling or private school, those were costs that we incurred personally. The local public school district benefited financially from our children being registered in that district, even though they didn't attend those public schools.

S.B. 11, The Parent Educational Freedom Act, provides the choices that parents and students should have in the State of Ohio, as it will afford every Ohio parent the opportunity to choose what is best for their child. We urge the Senate Education Committee to pass S.B. 11 for the benefit of all of Ohio's school children.

Thank you, Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee for hearing our testimony today in support of S. B. 11.