

Senate Bill 304 Proponent Testimony  
Ohio Senate Education Committee

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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and committee members, I am pleased to provide proponent testimony for Senate Bill 304.

**I support the expansion of school choice because it empowers me, as a parent, to make decisions that are in the best interest of my children, by removing (or at best, alleviating) such a significant financial burden attached to private education. As a parent, I can assure you that being given the ability to choose a school that fits my child's unique needs is absolutely vital to her education. With school choice, I am also given the power to hold that specific school accountable by choosing to stay or leave based on how well they meet my child's educational and personal needs. This type of accountability especially encourages the type of school my daughter currently attends--nonchartered schools—to continuously improve.**

**Furthermore, the financial relief that Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) offer families, like mine, is incredibly valuable. In light of the current economy and uncertain economic future, many families face financial challenges when it comes to choosing the best educational environment for their children. ESAs provide a way to lighten that financial burden and gives countless families, myself included, the opportunity to explore nonchartered schools, which—in my personal experience—tend to offer a more personalized and rigorous academic experience. Even though ESAs do not fund the schools themselves, they empower me, as a parent, with more options of where to send my children.**

**The freedom to choose allows American families to preserve educational diversity, supporting a range of methodologies without overwhelming regulations that do not contribute to the effectiveness of a school. Nonchartered schools are more personal to the students, by offering smaller class sizes, which in turn offers more individualized attention. These elements are significant in helping my daughter thrive academically and socially. I love that my daughter's nonchartered school can provide excellent preparation for both college and life, giving the students the tools they need to succeed. Sadly, without financial help, innumerable amounts of children will not be given the same opportunity.**

**One last significant point is that the competition created by school choice helps drive all schools, whether public or private, to improve. When schools are held accountable by parent choice, they are motivated to perform better, ensuring that every child receives a high-quality education. Sadly, the American public education system is currently showing a steady, significant decline in academic performance and test results, when compared to other first-world countries. Competition and empowering parents with various school choice options is absolutely critical.**

**In conclusion, I strongly believe that expanding school choice through programs like ESAs will create a more competitive, effective, and inclusive educational system. It is a step toward**

**ensuring that every child, regardless of background or financial situation, has access to the best educational opportunities and school environments that meet his/her needs.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.