

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Lisa Taylor. I am a mother of three children, ages 6 (Kindergarten), 9 (3rd grade), and 10 (4th grade) who attend public schools in Ohio. I'm here to urge the committee to include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget.

I have personal experience with the school voucher program here in Ohio. My youngest daughter attended one year of Kindergarten (2023 - 2024) at a private Catholic School prior to entering Kindergarten the following year (2024 – 2025) in our public school district. I made the choice to send my daughter to a private Kindergarten as a preparatory year for her. She has a summer birthday and I was aware that she would likely need to repeat Kindergarten. I signed up for the private Catholic School Kindergarten class prior to the expansion of the Ohio school voucher program. I was willing and able to send my daughter to a private school despite the added cost of tuition to the family budget. When the Ohio school voucher program was expanded in 2023, the private school raised their tuition just so they could take advantage of all the money that was being offered to the school by the state. I was instructed to apply for the expanded school voucher program despite living in a community that has a thriving public school system. I was eligible to receive free full tuition that would be covered by the State of Ohio newly expanded voucher system.

I would have sent my daughter to the private Catholic school whether I received the voucher for free tuition or not. The same is true of all families I spoke to about the voucher program. The expanded Ohio school voucher program is taking money from the public school system and giving it to wealthier families that would be sending their students to private schools anyway. The current voucher funding that is offered to wealthier families to send their children to private schools needs to be drastically reduced! Fund our public schools and support low-income families in failing school districts. But do not drain our public-school funding to give it to wealthier families that would send their children to private schools even if they did not receive a voucher. You are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus would do! You are taking from the poor to give to the rich with the newly expanded school voucher program.

Thriving public schools are essential to flourishing communities! The most sought-after communities are those with great public schools! If you help all Ohio public schools, you will be helping all Ohio communities!

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please include the 3rd phase of the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan in the state budget. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.