

Good morning -

Thank you for reading my testimony today. My name is Cassandra Barnes. I'm a lifelong Ohioan, a mother, and a former Ohio public school student. My 12-year-old is a current public school student in Milford, OH. I love our public schools and I think they provide a crucial foundation for growth, civic duty, and advancement for our children.

With that in mind, I'm here to urge the committee to continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget. Voucher programs have not been shown to improve educational outcomes. What they been shown to do is siphon off money from the public good of public education and redistribute it to private schools. The primary beneficiaries of this are wealthy families, at the expense of lower income families. <https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-experience-proves-school-vouchers-are-a-failed-policy-that-must-be-opposed-as-voucher-expansion-bills-gain-momentum-look-to-public-school-advocates-for-guidance/>

I'm currently raising my child in the Milford school district. I've watched this district reach out to the community again and again over the years with levy requests in order to do things like replace the crumbling middle school building or provide basic bus service. I've also watched my community frequently say no, as the community is financially exhausted. Neither the school system nor the community should be put in this contentious position. It only serves to the detriment of our children and our community.

Properly funded public schools are good for students and for the community. They raise property values and make Ohio a more attractive state for people to live and work in. They are good for our future workforce, for our future taxpayers. Voucher programs endanger and compromise public school funding, with no demonstrable net benefit. It is a waste of taxpayer money.

I ask you to consider my testimony and choose to support the 90% of Ohio students who attend public schools. Please continue phasing the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan into Ohio's budget. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Cassandra Barnes  
636 Wallace Ave.  
Milford, OH 45150  
cassied35@gmail.com