

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for House Bill 96.

My name is Lanie Montgomery, and I reside in eastern Delaware County with my husband and five children. While the State's current EdChoice Vouchers have provided funding for many families to send their children to the school of their choice, there are still barriers that stand in the way of true education freedom in the Buckeye State. My family is one such family that does not receive State support, because we send our children to a non-chartered, non-public school. I am writing to ask the State to make school choice a reality for all Ohio families by establishing educational savings accounts to fund students' education.

In the fall of 2023, we sent our children to Columbus Classical Academy (CCA). This school has been an answered prayer for our family. Not only are my children flourishing at CCA, but they are getting an education that I only dreamed about for them. We are a typical, middle-class family and are thankful for the opportunity for them to attend CCA. Nonetheless, it is a financial sacrifice for our family. The establishment of educational savings accounts in House Bill 96 would make a tremendous difference to us personally as well as to other families like ours throughout the State.

Many families are choosing to send their children to chartered schools due to monetary incentives created in HB 33, leaving non-chartered schools without a growing student body. CCA is the only school near our home that offers a solid and enriching classical education, so going elsewhere is not feasible for us. Likewise, CCA is the only school in our vicinity that shares the same values as our family's. Many more families could attend CCA and take advantage of its quality curriculum and wonderful teachers, but cannot, because State support is unavailable for such schools.

Many stand to greatly benefit from establishing Educational Savings Accounts. I would like for you to support true school choice by establishing educational savings accounts in this biennium budget. More children deserve to receive an education like the one mine are getting, but when some families receive State support and others do not, it puts barriers between students and the education they deserve. It creates an unfair advantage to other schools.

I ask the State to correct this oversight by making school choice truly universal in the Buckeye State by creating educational savings accounts. Please bring such a program to fruition during this budget cycle. It would make a world of difference for a significant amount of Ohio families, including ours.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 96.

Lanie Montgomery