

House Bill 96:

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 HB96.

Good Afternoon, my name is Tim Stahl. I reside in Licking County in the Northridge School District, and our oldest daughter attends a non-chartered private school, while our other three children are homeschooled. Although we are in the Northridge School District in Licking County, due to many circumstances, my wife and I decided to homeschool our 4 girls. We have absolutely loved homeschooling, but this past year our oldest daughter expressed great interest in going to school. We decided to send our 5th grader to Columbus Classical Academy, which is a Non-chartered school. Although we knew we would have to pay tuition, this is where we felt like we had to send our daughter because of what this school stands for and believes. That is the lovely thing about being able to have school choice, but in the same manner, we have no assistance in helping with this choice we have made. We believe, as parents, this is the perfect spot for our child, and Lord Willing our other three girls in the near future; however, the tuition would be unattainable for all of our girls at this point in our lives, but passing House Bill 96 would help us, if we decide, send all of our girls to this great school of our choice.

If a student does not attend a public school, then the state funds to educate the student should be made available in an educational savings account to be spent at an Ohio chartered or non-chartered private school. There is enough money allocated for education in Ohio, but it is time that the money follow the student. The easy answer for parents is to send their child to public school, however, House Bill 96 can provide educational dollars to follow the student in the form of an educational savings account permitting them to attend private chartered or non-chartered schools if they chose so.

All of us in this room have different beliefs, and this country allows us this freedom. That freedom should be extended to school choice for all schools in Ohio, including non-chartered schools or wherever a parent wants to send their child/children, such as Columbus Classical Academy. Although we have tried different schools in the past, including Dublin City Schools and Northridge, these schools just missed the mark on where we, as a family, believe a school should be for our children and their education. Finding Columbus Classical Academy has been a breath of fresh air and completely aligns with our educational goals. Although our 5th grader is the one attending Columbus Classical Academy, my wife and I feel like we are all a part of something bigger, with the hope that all of our girls can attend here. With the passing of House Bill 96, all our girls would have this opportunity.

Therefore, I urge the Committee to favorably report House Bill 96 to make school choice truly universal in the Buckeye State. Knowing that the state operating budget cycle is the avenue for advancing bold, transformational public policy, I urge the legislature to pass this Bill to bring to fruition during this decisive and impactful process school choice for all parents. It would make a world of difference for a significant amount of Ohio families.

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

Kind Regards,
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