

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of strengthening and expanding education opportunities for Ohio families in House Bill 96.

My name is Janine King. I reside in Powell, Ohio. I have three children, one child who graduated from Olentangy Liberty, one still in Olentangy Liberty, and one we moved from public to parochial then to a classical non-chartered, non-public school. Unfortunately, for my older two children, we did not have the option of a non-chartered non-public classical school for their education, but for my youngest, this is my deepest desire.

The single most important part of my life and my family's lives is faith in Jesus. My family's experience in public as well as parochial school led us to seek another option for our youngest child. My children in public schools were chastised for their faith by not only their peers, but also by their teachers, and administrators. When I attempted to resolve issues, I was once told that my "white, Catholic, boy's experience" didn't matter.

Not only have my children been persecuted in public schools for their faith, but the five star rating at Olentangy has not lived up to our expectations. Grade inflation, test retakes, and late assignments are the norm. My children were told that they are "great writers" when in fact, their writing is more like text messages or thoughts being dumped on a paper having no understanding of grammar or vocabulary higher than a 5th grade level. The books provided in the high school classrooms are written at 5th grade reading levels and are more about "feelings or ideologies" than they are about content.

Our public school system also does not hold students to the standard set forth in the code of conduct that they sign each year. Young women wearing short skirts, daisy dukes, and crop tops are the norm in the hallways not to mention students wearing elf ears, dog collars, and animal tails. Bullying is rampant and my son was educated on oral sex in the 7th grade by his health teacher.

For our youngest we chose differently. We chose a school focused on rigor, knowledge, character, and virtue. We desired to have her in a school where she was free to exercise her beliefs while learning good, true, and beautiful things. We wanted her education to be free from "screens" and oriented toward the transcendent. We wanted her to recite poetry, read excellent classic pieces of literature, and learn cursive. We wanted her to be able to remain a kid for as long as possible and for my husband and I to provide a biblical basis for sexual education.

What we have found in our classical school has inspired curiosity, wonder, and perseverance in our daughter. She is once again filled with joy through her education, even as she struggles with the rigorous curriculum. She is surrounded by students who seek virtue and abide by an honor code. It is truly a beautiful education that every child should have access to, but the financial burden to every family is great and many who deeply desire to attend our school simply can not.

Please help every family choose to educate their children in the school of their choice by funding the proposed ESAs for non-chartered non-public schools at 100% of the EdChoice scholarship model. All children should have equal benefits in the eyes of the state to choose the school that provides the best education of their choosing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on supporting education opportunities for Ohio families in House Bill 96.