

February 25, 2025 – Amy Conley, Senate Bill 68 testimony

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 68, which would establish the Non-chartered Educational Savings Account Program in Ohio.

My name is Amy Conley, I am a lifelong Buckeye and I reside in Columbus in the Southwestern City School District. I'm here today to acknowledge that while school choice was expanded in the last state operating budget cycle through the EdChoice Scholarship Program, there are still a significant amount of Ohio families who have been left out. My family is one of them.

We chose to send both of our children to Columbus Classical Academy, a non-chartered, nonpublic school, after researching our options because it is important to us that our children get the best education possible, especially in these formative years. Our children have been in the school system for over 9 years. We started in a public school, then moved to a public chartered school, back to a local public school, then homeschool and nothing was working well until we found Columbus Classical Academy. We chose Columbus Classical Academy because it aligns best with our values at home and the integrity we want to instill in our children to teach them to be productive, contributing members of society.

This school has made a significant difference in the way my children learn and has instilled a level of confidence and a love of learning that I have not seen in our previous school experiences. They ask me to go to school now, even on their days off. My children are learning more than I could have ever taught them as a homeschool Mom. My 6<sup>th</sup> grade daughter was behind about 2 years in math and has caught up in 6 months at CCA. My son who is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade has an incredible capacity to learn deep and meaningful things. Things that I could not have confidently instilled in him without the help of the administration and faculty at Columbus Classical Academy, in fact, he no longer needs a 504 plan or IEP because what he is getting at CCA is far better than anything we have been offered in any of our previous experiences. I could go on and on about the benefits we have seen but for the sake of time.

The Non-chartered Education Savings Account Program would completely change the financial landscape of our family to be honest. I had been taking care of my elderly Mother with Alzheimer's full time until recently which caused a significant financial strain due to my inability to work while caring for her. My husband just recently changed careers, and we opened a business which required a significant amount of time and financial investment. We have not been able to fund a savings or retirement account for the last 4 years because of it. We live paycheck to paycheck most weeks and the passing of this bill would free up an

incredible amount of stress on our family, giving us the freedom to provide an opportunity for them to learn in a safe, good and true environment to the best of their ability to learn.

I urge the Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 68 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 bring the Non-chartered Education Savings Account program to fruition during this decisive and impactful process. It would make a world of difference for a significant amount of Ohio families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 68. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.