

Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 68
Submitted by Anne Mandell
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To: Senate Finance Committee Hearing
Date: Tuesday, February 25

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 Anne Mandell and I reside in Westerville, Ohio. 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.

I began my career in a department store where I specialized in selling shoes. During my tenure as a salesperson, I diligently studied the products, memorized retail information, and trained extensively on the benefits and features of various brands and styles. Additionally, I acquired expertise in properly measuring feet and fitting shoes. In doing so, I learned that each individual's feet have unique characteristics. Beyond differences in size, there are variations such as width, arch height, toe length and heel shape. Interestingly, it is not uncommon for individuals to have one foot that is larger than the other.

Soon after I began selling shoes, I became a department manager. Transitioning to managing others was a learning curve. To lead and encourage effectively, I needed to understand what motivated each team member. I realized the team had diverse personalities, ages, experiences, and learning styles. I adapted my management style to suit each individual for optimal performance.

From management, I transitioned into the corporate world of buying shoes. While competition is fierce in the retail world, I know how important it is to have many choices for my customers. Choices range from capturing trend to traditional, emerging brands to legacy brands, specialty shoes such as technical training shoes, to wear to work shoes.

Through my various roles all within the shoe retail world, it has changed my perspective on how I view and approach things.

Our son started his education in a public school. While he enjoyed it and everything seemed fine, we felt he wasn't reaching his full potential. We were actively involved with his homework and school events, and he had friends and was doing well socially. However, something was missing. We explored alternative learning options such as tutoring and online learning platforms, but none seemed to be the right solution. Then we discovered Columbus Classical Academy, a non-public, non-chartered school. Attending a private school was something we had never considered as a family, but after visiting the school and having our son spend a day there, we realized it was the right fit for his learning style and needs. Our son now finds joy in learning and that is what we realized was missing to unlock to his full potential.

All children are unique. They have different personalities, behaviors, and reactions. They receive and respond to information in various ways. Even twins can be quite different from each other.

Please include non-charted schools like Columbus Classical Academy for the Educational Saving Accounts. Excluding them limits children's opportunities to find their right fit.

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