

I support establishing the Non-chartered Education Savings Program in Ohio. South Ridge Christian Academy is one of the school's that will be able to benefit from the passing of this law. SRCA was founded in 1973 and this historic bill is very near and dear to our hearts.

Many others today will cover the various benefits of this bill so I will just briefly list them.

- **Parental Choice and Accountability:** School choice empowers parents to decide on their children's education and fosters real accountability in schools. The best measure of accountability for private schools is parents' ability/choice to stay or leave. Nonchartered schools meet the minimum standards of education for Ohio and are subject to all health and safety laws.
- **Financial Relief for Parents:** The program would reduce financial pressure on families choosing nonchartered schools. It would allow other families to choose nonchartered schools in addition to chartered nonpublic schools. The ESAs do NOT fund schools; they fund parents' choice of school.
- **Preserving Educational Freedom:** The program supports proven and successful educational methodologies without overregulation (reporting without function or control).
- **Educational Quality:** Nonchartered schools provide personalized attention (often small class sizes), strong academics, and excellent preparation for college and life.
- **Positive Financial Impact on Public Schools:** The ESAs are funded by state tax dollars not local property taxes. Public schools retain the local education funds when a student transfers from a public school to a nonchartered school resulting in more dollars per pupil.
- **Competition Improves Education:** Expanding school choice encourages all schools to perform better.

However, I do have some concerns with the bill as introduced. I would start by encouraging the committee to revise the language requiring yearly standardized testing.

A very real concern as a non-public, non-chartered school is that these tests may contain material that is in opposition with the conservative values that our parents desire in their children's education. Our parents enrolled their children with us because they wished to protect them from exposure to certain subjects. Forcing standardized testing is a way to maneuver around that protection.

My first proposal to revise the language of Section 3310.23 #4 to include not just "nationally" recognized standardized test, but to also allow for Ohio's standardized test (the OST) and the Ohio Department of Education's yearly List of Approved Assessments (as posted on the education.ohio.gov website) as acceptable tests.

My second proposal is a request to reduce the amount of times the child is expected to take the standardized tests. Taking a standardized test every single year K-12 is a large burden on our children. I would request that we match the public schools requirements of taking the OST for 3rd-8th grades.

My third proposal is that instead of standardized testing, why not have the schools submit an end-of-year report for the child. A simple single page containing basic information, scores, and attendance, and perhaps a second page to include records of educational milestones. (Ex. Susie began the year knowing addition and subtraction and by the end of the year was in long division.) These kind of reports would satisfy the record-keeping needs of the state treasurer.

Moving on from standardized testing, there is one other major concern that I have. Page 7 lines 188-189 states that if a student transfers to a home education setting, then the funds are distributed to the resident district. Why? Why does the money go to the public school system when that system is doing nothing to contribute to the expense of the child's education?

We have an Extension school at South Ridge Christian Academy which is basically the homeschooling branch. Parents purchase their curriculum through us and we keep records of the child's scores and progress. For those that graduate from our program, we provide a transcript and diploma. They are homeschoolers, but still enrolled through our Academy.

The current language in this bill punishes families for choosing a home education for their children and I implore you to re-examine that proposed section.

Despite these concerns, I still support SB 68 and I pray that it is passed into law. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.