

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 Chauncey Montgomery, and I reside in eastern Delaware County with my wife and five children. First, I would like to express my appreciation for the State's expansion of school choice with the EdChoice program in the previous biennium budget. It is critical that we give our youth the best education available. The EdChoice program provides resources for many families to explore alternative educational opportunities that will make Ohio stronger and more competitive.

We are one such family that sought education from a source other than the local public school for our children. After researching several options in our region, we chose Columbus Classical Academy (CCA) for several reasons. First, our children receive a well-rounded, rigorous education at CCA. Not only does CCA's curriculum provide our children with the needed skills to succeed in life, but it also provides a strong liberal arts education, grounded in the Western tradition. Second, CCA aligns with the values we are trying to instill in our children. We are confident that our children are getting the moral nourishment needed to make them virtuous, upright citizens, namely, good neighbors. Finally, from a practical standpoint, CCA is within a reasonable distance from our residence, so we can easily transport our children to and from school without significant disruption to our daily schedule.

However, CCA is a non-chartered, non-public school, and EdChoice support is unavailable for such institutions. In other words, our family receives no support from the State for our children's education. As such, educating our children at the school of our choice creates a significant financial hardship for our family, as it does for many others.

I ask that you support the creation of a Non-chartered Educational Savings Account Program for families like ours. By doing so, you would provide equality of education to all children in Ohio and would level the playing field, making school choice accessible to all families.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my testimony on Senate Bill 68. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.