

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

My name is Lanie Montgomery, and I reside in eastern Delaware County with my husband and five children. I am writing to thank the State for expanding school choice in the last state budget cycle through the EdChoice Scholarship Program. However, a significant number of Ohio families, including mine, have been left out.

In the fall of 2023, we sent our children to Columbus Classical Academy (CCA). CCA is a non-chartered, non-public school that is in its second year. This school has been an answered prayer for our family. Not only are my children flourishing at CCA, but they are getting an education that I only dreamed about for them. We are a typical, middle-class family and are thankful for the opportunity for them to attend CCA. Nonetheless, it is a financial sacrifice for our family, and Senate Bill 68 would make a tremendous difference to us personally as well as to others like us throughout our entire state.

Many families are choosing to send their children to chartered schools due to monetary incentives created in HB 33, leaving non-chartered schools without a growing student body. CCA is the only school near our home that offers a rigorous and well-rounded classical education, so going elsewhere is not feasible for us. Likewise, CCA is the only school in our vicinity that shares the same values as our family's. Many more families could attend CCA and take advantage of its quality curriculum and wonderful teachers.

Many stand to greatly benefit from establishing Educational Savings Accounts. I would like for you to support the Non-chartered Educational Savings Account Program Bill. More children deserve to receive an education like the one mine are getting, but when some families receive state support and others do not, it puts barriers between students and the education they deserve. It creates an unfair advantage to other schools.

I ask this Committee to please correct this oversight by favorably reporting Senate Bill 68 to make school choice truly universal in the Buckeye State. Please bring the Non-chartered Educational Savings Account Program to fruition during this budget cycle. It would make a world of difference for a significant amount of Ohio families, including ours.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 68.

Lanie J. Montgomery