

**Interested Party Testimony for House Bill [96]  
Senate Finance Committee**

Thursday, May 29th, at 9:00AM

**Jerrad Christian, American**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, and members of the Finance Committee of the Ohio Senate:

My name is Jerrad Christian. I'm a father, a veteran, and a proud product of Ohio's public schools. I live in [insert your town] and my child attends [insert school name].

I'm testifying today as an interested party to express strong concern about House Bill 96. I'm here to advocate for fully funding Ohio's public schools and to oppose provisions in this bill that divert public education dollars to private institutions. This is not just a budget issue—it's a statement about who we value and what kind of future we're building.

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I grew up poor in rural Ohio. For kids like me, school wasn't just a place to learn—it was where we ate, where we stayed warm, and where we were seen. I remember teachers who made sure I had what I needed when my family couldn't. I wouldn't have survived, let alone succeeded, without the structure and care my public school gave me.

Now I'm a parent. And when I look at my son, I want him—and every child—to know that they matter enough for us to invest in them. House Bill 96 risks taking away the same foundation I had. If public money is handed over to private schools that aren't accountable to our communities, we're pulling up the ladder behind us.

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I come from a community where many families struggle—working long hours and still barely getting by. We rely on public schools not just for academics, but for meals, mental health support, and stability. When you pull funding from those schools, it doesn't just affect test scores—it affects real lives.

House Bill 96 creates a system where only some kids win. Private schools aren't required to serve everyone, and they don't always reflect or support the

communities they're in. Families like mine, and kids like the one I used to be, are the ones left behind when public dollars go private.

I'm asking this committee to vote no on House Bill 96. Fully fund our public schools. Protect the promise that every child—no matter where they live or how much money their parents make—deserves the same shot I had.

This bill risks turning education into a privilege instead of a right. Please don't let that happen. Keep public funds where they belong: in public schools, serving every child.

Thank you.