

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony regarding HB 96. My name is Dan Gass. I understand that this bill does not include an ESA or tax credits for families with children attending non-chartered non-private schools. I would like the committee to consider including these provisions in the budget so that quality education can be more accessible to families like mine.

My oldest son attends Columbus Classical Academy. After homeschooling him through 5th grade, my wife and I were pleased with how much he was learning relative to other students his age in the subjects he was interested in, but we decided that he needed additional structure and rigor for subjects that were less motivating to him. What sold us on CCA was the academic expertise and passion of the faculty, a curriculum that emphasizes physical fitness, as well as the school-wide culture of excellence.

Our expectations for CCA have been exceeded and met. We are grateful for the important ways in which the school has been shaping our son to develop virtue. He has been exhibiting steady growth in his academic subject areas. He clearly admires his teachers – even of the subjects he doesn't particularly enjoy. He is by nature a bookworm, so CCA's emphasis on regular physical fitness has been very beneficial for his health. Before he started school, he wasn't sleeping well at night. After a couple weeks of school, he was able to go to bed on time and sleep well during the night. Just through attending school alone, he has become obviously much more physically fit.

Our ability to send our son to school is premised on a generous scholarship along with some financial assistance from family members. An ESA would allow us as parents to choose educational options that best fit our family's needs. This would free up funds for the school to help support additional deserving families. Establishing an ESA for non-chartered schools would also give us the ability to send additional kids in our family to CCA should the need arise.

I urge the Committee to include Education Savings Accounts for non-chartered non-public schools during this budget cycle. It would make a world of difference for a significant amount of Ohio families, including mine.

Thank you for considering my testimony in this matter. I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have via the contact information provided with my submission.

Dan Gass