

Testimony Regarding H.B. 110  
May 4, 2021

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee.

I would like to first begin by thanking everyone for allowing my voice to be heard on H.B. 110, and apologize for not being with you in person. I work as a drug and alcohol therapist in Toledo, working with those affected by the opioid crisis and I am unable to take a day off of work.

When it comes to Ed Choice, I have always “played by the rules” and that was no different when my husband and I decided to send our youngest child to St. Francis De Sales for 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The way the law was previously written would have no impact on his ability to attend St. Francis for high school and still qualify for the Ed Choice Scholarship. But recent changes to the law makes him no longer eligible for the scholarship. If my child does not qualify for the scholarship for his high school years it would be devastating to have to pull him from St. Francis where he has flourished. While I am unaware of the number of students in Ohio this change will impact, I believe that the only fair thing to do is to at least Grandfather these students and allow them to continue their education in the learning community where they have been.

Both my sons are currently enrolled at St. Francis, and, in both cases, I followed the law exactly as it was written when they enrolled for the first time. But we learned, after the fact, that the law was recently changed and my youngest son no longer qualifies for the Ed Choice Scholarship for high school, despite the fact that he did qualify (for high school) when we enrolled him at St. Francis (2020-2021). Changing the rules mid-stream in a pandemic does not seem like the optimal idea for a child’s education. The one thing that hasn’t changed is the local public high school, Woodward, which remains a failing school. As a mother and a social worker, I would be delinquent in my ethics if I did not advocate for my son and other children in this situation. I understand that the cost for programs such as Ed Choice are great but I believe that changing the rules during a pandemic are a greater burden to families such as mine and I am concerned about the lasting affect it will have on students in Ohio.

Especially frustrating, because of the pandemic, I have had a hard time finding anyone that could answer any of my questions about the Ed Choice program recent changes. In fact, St. Francis was unaware of the changes when they applied for the scholarship on his behalf and were shocked to see his application rejected.

I am respectfully requesting, on behalf of my son and others that share our situation, for these children to receive the Ed Choice Scholarship as we followed the rules as written, during the time of their enrollment. The positive impact of the scholarship money for families like ours, is that it makes our choice of high schools financially attainable. Without these funds, families like ours may be forced to send our children to schools that are not only failing, but not the educational community of their choice.

I am very happy to speak with any of you individually if you have further questions. Thank you, Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee for your consideration of my child’s future.

Respectfully,

Maureen Mohny, MSW, LSW