

Testimony Regarding H.B. 110
May 5, 2021

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony regarding H.B.110.

My name is Erica Duquette Miley and on behalf of St. Benedict Catholic School in Toledo, Ohio, sponsored by Little Flower and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Parishes, I implore you to continue to offer and fully fund the scholarship programs in the state of Ohio. The Traditional EdChoice and Edchoice Expansion scholarships have enriched not only the lives of the children and families receiving them, but our entire school community.

As a mother of two St. Benedict students first, I also serve as marketing director for the school. I have seen firsthand the value these vouchers bring for families who would otherwise be in a failing school system and to those who do not have the same socio-economic advantages as other families. This program is a stepping stone for many families to ensure their children are on the pathway to success, not only in school, but in life.

Knowing your time is valuable and limited, I have compiled a few quotes from parents of our students currently benefiting from the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship:

“Ed choice is an amazing opportunity for children in our area to break the cycle of our failing public schools. I am excited that our children are able to attend St. Benedict Catholic School where they are able to have the same if not better opportunities that I had attending a private school as a child. St. Benedict provides structure, diversity, and community for our children. We CHOOSE St. Benedict because it encompasses real world diversity and smaller classes that allow the teachers to be more hands on. We appreciate all the efforts St. Benedict does to make sure ALL children in their building are getting the best education.

– Nichole Thanasiu, St. Benedict Parent

“I have two children attending St. Benedict and we are so thankful for the great education both academically and spiritually that they have received. To know that my children are valued so much with their friends/family at this school has been more than appreciated. We will continue our journey at St. Benedict and are so thankful for it.”

– Tiffany Gregory, St. Benedict Parent

“My family has benefited from the Ed Choice Scholarship opportunity in so many ways. My kids have had many opportunities to grow both spiritually and academically thanks to the opportunity they have had to go to St. Benedict Catholic School. They are both well above the state average in their MAP scores and I feel this is in huge part to their education received from the private school. I truly hope this scholarship continues to be available to the kids who choose can benefit most from it.”

– Barbara Wyszczelski, St. Benedict Parent

Not only do our parents recognize the need for choice, that one size does not fit all, but our own students recognize this as well. In a recent essay, a 5th grader who transferred from the public school system stated: "This environment is better than my previous schools, because it is a loving environment that you would feel safe in." In the end, this is the goal. We know children first need to feel safe and loved to fully thrive and learn. We provide this environment, but we need you to continue to provide these opportunities to our community through fully funded scholarship programs.

An increase in funding for these programs is still a savings to the state when compared to what the state pays per child in public schools, which should be applauded by taxpayers everywhere, allowing more funding for state needs. In addition to funding, we also are asking you to expand and streamline the program so more families may have the opportunity to choose the education environment that is best for their child.

Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for your time and consideration.