

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 Andrea De la Roca. I was born in the Guatemala City, Guatemala. On July 4, 2001, my father and I arrived to Napoleon, Oh. Currently, I live in Toledo, Oh. I am a mother of two sons and a daughter. Anthony is a Jr., Alexander is freshman and Aissa is a sixth grader.

Ohio is a generous state! As a new immigrant, I have accomplish many personal and professional goals. Thanks to the help that I received from many organizations and state agencies, I have been available to obtain my G.E.D., my Associates and Bachelor degree. Receiving a higher education increased my opportunities for better paying jobs and higher quality of life.

In 2015, I accomplish my biggest goal, purchasing a home. As a mother, I want to be my children best advocate and provide them with a safe and secure environment. I also want them to spend most of their time in a school environment where the teachers and staff encourage them, and they feel safe and secure.

The scholarship program is important to me, because without it I could not afford sending my children to the school that best support me as a parent and serves their learning needs. One size does not fit all, and it is essential to have my child attend a school that works for them. My children attend a Catholic school and the impact of receiving a Catholic education is enormous. Here are the three main reasons why my children attend Catholic schools:

1. My children learn better in a single-sex Catholic school environment.
2. Catholic schools focus on serving others as part of their education for students. Students learn the value of volunteerism and compassion for others, often through service hours built into the curriculum.
3. Students who graduate from Catholic high schools are more likely to graduate from college. My goa is to get my children to a college and graduate, a Catholic high school is a great option for us.

As their mother, I know my child's gifts, talents and needs the best. Therefore, having a choice on which school to send them it is very important to me.

I thank you for your previous support of scholarship programs and make the following recommendations:

- a. Please, continue to offer and fully fund scholarship programs.
- b. No families should missed the opportunity to have a choice, please expand programs to meet the demand.
- c. Increase the value of the scholarships – it has been more than six years since scholarship amounts were increased.

- d. The application process should be streamlined. Right now, it is taking months to receive notice after applications are submitted. Families often do not have a decision until several months into the school year.

I thank the Chair Brenner and members of the committee for the opportunity to voice my concerns and hear my recommendations.