

Chairman Brenner, Vice chair Blessing, Ranking member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for reading my testimony concerning the Fair Funding Plan in HB 110.

My name is Malia Lewis and I am currently the vice president of the Cleveland Heights University Heights City Schools Board of Education. My two children graduated from Heights High in 2019 after starting in the District's preschool programs in 2005. We chose to send my son to private/parochial school for the 8th grade at our family's full expense. But public school proved to be a better fit for him both academically and socially. Both children just finished their sophomore years of college this week; public school prepared them well for college AND for the craziness that has been their experience during COVID. CH-UH's excellent and dedicated teachers and support staff taught them resilience, persistence, flexibility, and dedication to their ultimate goals. For that I will always be grateful.

And because of that gratitude, I have spent years volunteering to help our public school system in whatever way I can depending on the phases of my life. Today I am advocating for the nearly 5000 students in the CH-UH district, as a school board member. And I am also advocating for the students in my community who use private or parochial schools, as a tax payer. Every home owner pays property taxes to support services which benefit the whole community, whether or not any one individual uses that particular service. I may not use our local Fire Department if I never suffer a house fire, but I benefit from their ability to put out my neighbour's house fire. Similarly, private and parochial families benefit from living in a community which provides the best education possible to all its children. We all pay taxes to support the common good.

Vouchers to subsidise the cost of private education are a boon to private or parochial families with several children, or families for whom tuition is a stretch. But those vouchers should not undermine the solvency of our local public school district. Just as my ability or desire to buy and own a book should not undermine my community's access to the books on our public library. When vouchers lead to the public school's inability to provide for

The Fair Funding Plan in HB 110 will provide financial for school districts which is built upon the actual cost of educating students. The plan is the result of 3 years of careful research and will improve stability and predictability for all school districts in Ohio. The plan will fund EdChoice vouchers directly, rather than pulling money intended for public school students out of their Districts' budgets. Both of these components are key to making sure that Ohio provides a system of public schools which educates every child, as required by our constitution. Our state needs to ensure that every child is properly educated to become an active and engaged citizen—otherwise our democracy founders.

Please support the Fair Funding Plan as it has been crafted in HB 110.

Thank you for your time,

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