

Testimony on HB110 (Appropriations for FY 2022-23 Budget)
Submitted to the Ohio Senate Primary & Secondary Education Committee,
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by Kenji Sakaie, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

Chairman Brenner, Vice chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, my name is Kenji Sakaie and I thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony about the Fair School Funding Plan in HB110.

As a student at a reputedly failing school, I will inform you emphatically that our public schools deserve your support. As we look to determine the future of education, we must take a step back and decide what we want out of the system. There is more to education than an ill-conceived system of state testing. Our public schools were conceived at the turn of the 19th century as a pillar of our civilization. Its purpose was and remains to instill republican virtues in our people. We need this now in our chaotic time more than ever. Unfortunately, our public schools have been branded as failing and stripped of funding by frankly bizarre school choice schemes. If a man has a broken leg, you don't get him walking again by breaking the other leg. EdChoice, under the pretense of rescuing students from failing schools, has instead beaten down those same schools, stripping them of funding rather than taking the sane step of funding the program directly. Our lawmakers must consider: if we focused instead on making meaningful improvements to the public education system which has served our state so well for so long, would there be a need for EdChoice? Visit Cleveland Heights High School, and tell me that it is failing. It is not perfect, the vouchers have made sure of that. It is time that America rediscovers its republican virtues, the source of our strength, and the schools which gave them to us.