

Information concerning House Bill 136/Senate Bill 128

On March 1, Ohio Representative and Majority Floor Leader Matt Huffman introduced House Bill 136, an innovative proposal to *dramatically* expand school vouchers throughout the state and increase the ability of Ohio parents to choose the right educational setting for their child.

The bill proposes two new scholarships: the Parental Choice and Taxpayer Savings Scholarship and the Special Education Scholarship. The text of the proposal can be found via this link: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=129_HB_136. The proposal already has bipartisan support and more than 35 legislative co-sponsors.

If it passes, many parents who are concerned with the quality of their child's education would be eligible for school vouchers for the first time in Ohio history. Eligibility would include:

- Any student who comes from a middle- or lower-income family, regardless of the area of the state they live in – rural, urban, or suburban. Families of 4 making up to \$100,000/year would be eligible for a scholarship worth \$2,313 and families of 4 making up to \$61,000/year would be eligible for the maximum voucher worth \$4,626. Families in-between would be awarded scholarships on a sliding scale. Within a short time, this will also include families currently attending private school who are already making sacrifices to pay tuition.
- Any student with special needs who has an Individual Education Program, regardless of income. This would allow any student with an IEP to access their preferred public and private school options through a scholarship, just like the one that is already available to students in Ohio with autism.

Key components of the program include:

- Voucher eligibility would begin in kindergarten and continue through high school graduation.
- The voucher amount will be determined on a sliding scale based on family income. Families will be eligible for vouchers worth \$2,313-\$4,626.
- If a school's tuition amount is less than the maximum scholarship amount, families can use the leftover money for other education costs including Ohio college tuition.
- Cleveland students would finally achieve voucher funding parity with students across the state, raising the scholarship maximum from \$3,105 to \$4,626 and would no longer require a 10% parent co-pay.
- EdChoice and Cleveland voucher recipients would be included in this program. No student currently receiving a voucher would lose it.
- Because the maximum scholarship amount is only 80% of the state formula funding amount, the state saves \$1,157-\$3,470 for each public school student who participates.

Under this plan, eligibility for vouchers would increase more than ten-fold. This is the most meaningful school choice proposal we have ever had in Ohio and is one of the most forward-thinking proposals in the country.

It is a tremendous step toward true student-funded school choice where families are able to make sure that the tax dollars allocated for their child's education are being spent at a school where she or he can learn best.

The Success of this School Choice Expansion Depends on YOU

There is expected to be a lot of excitement about House Bill 136 (HB 136) in the legislature, but it has a long way to go to become a reality. Your legislators need to hear from you that you're excited too. The opponents of this bill are going to be shouting very, very loudly against it and they will be speaking out in droves. That's why we all need to do our part.

Further information can be found at:

Blog with summary of House Bill 136 - <http://scoho.org/wordpress/?p=738>

House Bill 136 - http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=129_HB_136

Senate Bill 128 - http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=129_SB_128

Blog with bills concerning School Choice - <http://scoho.org/wordpress/index.php?s=Senate+Bill+128>

House District 73 (Mansfield)

Representative Jay P. Goyal
77 S. High St
10th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6111
Phone: (614) 466-5802
Fax: (614) 719-3973

Senate District 19 (Mansfield)

Senator Kris Jordan
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: (614) 466-8086
Email: SD19@senate.state.oh.us

Correct Salutation and Closing

<u>Governor</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Senator</u>
The Governor <i>Street Address</i> <i>City, State ZIP</i>	The Honorable Name <i>House of Representatives</i> <i>Address</i> <i>City, State ZIP</i>	The Honorable Name <i>Senate</i> <i>Address</i> <i>City, State ZIP</i>
Dear Governor Name ,	Dear Representative Name ,	Dear Senator Name ,
Sincerely, Sign your name legibly	Sincerely, Sign your name legibly	Sincerely, Sign your name legibly

The Honorable Jay P. Goyal
House of Representatives
77 S. High St
10th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6111

RE: Urging the Legislature to Pass House Bill 136

Dear Representative Goyal:

I am writing to urge the Ohio Legislature to pass House Bill 136 on the issues of school choice and special education. I would urge you to support increasing school vouchers throughout the state which increase the ability of Ohio parents to choose the right educational setting for their child.

As the parent, I am very concerned about the education currently received by students in some Ohio schools. This is a tremendous step toward true student-funded school choice where we are able to make sure our tax dollars allocated for our children's education are being spent at a school where our children can learn best.

Parents know what their children need and are best suited to make that choice, but many times can't afford the best education, which may be provided at the private school. I am asking that the provision include parents already sending their children to private schools, many times under great sacrifice.

The special needs provisions in this bill are also crucial in helping families with students with special needs. We need additional funding in order to pay for the high expenses of an alternative public or private special education program.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue to families of the state of Ohio. Ohio's residents would greatly benefit from the passage of House Bill 136.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Address

City, State ZIP

Telephone number

The Honorable Kris Jordan
Senate
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Urging the Legislature to Pass Senate Bill 128/House Bill 136

Dear Senator Jordan:

I am writing to urge the Ohio Legislature to pass Senate Bill 128/House Bill 136 on the issues of school choice and special education. I would urge you to support increasing school vouchers throughout the state which increase the ability of Ohio parents to choose the right educational setting for their child.

As the parent, I am very concerned about the education currently received by students in some Ohio schools. This is a tremendous step toward true student-funded school choice where we are able to make sure our tax dollars allocated for our children's education are being spent at a school where our children can learn best.

Parents know what their children need and are best suited to make that choice, but many times can't afford the best education, which may be provided at the private school. I am asking that the provision include parents already sending their children to private schools, many times under great sacrifice.

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Thank you for your attention to this important issue to families of the state of Ohio. Ohio's residents would greatly benefit from the passage of Senate Bill 128/House Bill 136.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Address

City, State ZIP

Telephone number

Tips for Corresponding with Legislators

Letters provide elected officials contact with public opinion. Staying in touch with constituent opinion is the responsibility of the legislator, and voter initiated correspondence is encouraged. They are never "too busy" for your correspondence, so don't think you are imposing. Mail gets priority, as every letter represents a potential vote.

DO's	DON'Ts
Do address your legislator properly and be courteous.	Don't be informal. A letter to a legislator is a formal business letter.
Do discuss only one issue in a letter.	Don't include multiple issues in one letter. If you have more than one issue to address, send separate letters for each issue.
Do identify the bill you are addressing, if one has been introduced. Include the bill number and title. The number and title of a federal bill can be obtained from Website http://thomas.loc.gov/	Don't begin a letter with a righteous tone, such as "as a tax paying citizen."
Do use your own words. If you receive a sample letter from an organization, put it into you own words.	Don't send form letters or copies of "sample" letters.
Do write legibly. Hand written letters are fine if they are readable.	Don't send preprinted postcards.
Do use your own stationery.	Don't use stationery from an employer or organization unless you are writing as a spokesperson for the employer or organization.
Do be concise and to the point. Try to keep your letter to one or two pages.	Don't be vague or ramble on, leaving the legislator to wonder what you are trying to say.
Do sign your name legibly and include your address.	Don't ignore your legislator and write to one from another district. You have more influence with the legislator from your district, even if you agree with others and not yours.
Do identify your profession. A letter may include a statement such as "as a professional nurse..."	Don't send copies to other legislators. Write separately to each representative and senator.
Do provide brief examples and situations that illustrate your point.	Don't be rude or threaten not to vote for the legislator. Your concerns may get lost in the tone of your letter.
Do include editorials and commentaries from newspapers.	Don't include confidential information obtained in the course of your professional role. Discuss general situations, such as "Last year I witnessed the death of 3 children due to bicycle accidents."
Do write early, as a bill is being introduced. If your legislator is a member of the committee to which the bill is being referred, write before the bill is reviewed in committee. If not, write before the bill is scheduled for the floor.	
Do write the chairperson or committee members holding hearings on legislation in which you are interested.	