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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 428
House Education and Career Readiness Committee
October 10th, 2017

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for allowing me to come before you today and present sponsor testimony on House Bill 428.

As Representative LaTourette mentioned, this legislation was introduced and passed out of the House last General Assembly. Representative Hayes's version unfortunately ran out of time in the Senate, however it is a good, solid and inclusive bill that we believe will positively enhance student liberties in Ohio's public schools.

House Bill 428 will more intentionally both project and protect the rights of students by ensuring to administrators, educators, students and parents (and their legal advisors) with written clarity that a student enrolled in a public school may engage in religious expression in the same manner and to the same extent that a student is permitted to engage in secular activities.

Under the bill, schools cannot prohibit a student from engaging in religious expression via their clothing nor in the completion of homework, artwork, or other written and oral assignments. Assignment grades and scores will still be calculated using ordinary academic standards.

H.B. 428 allows students who wish to conduct meetings for the purposes of engaging in religious expression the same access to school facilities as is given to other secular student groups. Having access to such facilities would allow students to establish faculty-advised, student-led religious clubs that properly and freely engage in faith-related expression.

Once again, Chairman Brenner and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of HB 428. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Tim Ginter
State Representative
Ohio's 5th House District