

Aaron Beacom

5/29/2024

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 445. My name is Aaron Beacom and I am from Morrow County, Ohio.

I am writing to strongly urge you to pass HB 445 in support of Released Time Religious Instruction for Ohio's public school children. I believe the only right choice is to give parents and guardians who so choose the right to send their children to Released Time Religious Instruction programs in ALL Ohio school districts and municipalities. The 1952 Supreme Court ruling *Zorach v. Clauson* already allows for such programs. HB 445 will allow parents the right and guardians the right to make decisions for their own children instead of the school.

Recent research available on the Lifewise Academy website shows that Released Time Religious Instruction “has made a positive impact on students' attendance, behavior and social emotional well-being”. Children have the opportunity thru these programs to be taught lessons regarding character, respect, morals, and compassion along with Religious Instruction – which is the foundation of these values.

Released Time Religious Instruction is not against public schools, but rather exists to come along side our public schools as a caring community to assist in raising up the next generation to care for and serve our communities and one another.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for House Bill 445.

Sincerely, Aaron Beacom.