

Catherine Hall
HB 445 Proponent Testimony

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 Catherine Hall and I am from Montgomery County.

I am a proponent for released time religious instruction and that the school district "shall" adopt a released time policy giving parents, not schools, the ultimate choice in whether to provide religious instruction for their children

I have several reasons why I am a proponent; including:

1. There is an increasing interest by parents favoring teaching public school students moral and character education.
2. Some school districts have been denying parents access to released time programs.
3. There is evidence that demonstrates a positive impact of religious instructions on student behavior, academics and mental health.
4. Parents know what is best for their own child.
5. Not all parents who want religious instruction are able to choose religious private school or home schooling. Released time makes religious education available to those who don't have access.

My own recent, personal observation of released time religious education has validated the above reasons with a significant increase in parents who choose this option for their children. I have also observed students embracing what they have learned and articulate how they have applied it in their relationship with God, their families, their teachers and their peers. It is discouraging to know this opportunity isn't available for all students' in Ohio.

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

Sincerely,

Catherine Hall