

HB 445 Proponent Testimony
Pastor David DiYanni

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 David DiYanni and I am from Licking County.

As a pastor, parent, and grandparent, I believe release time for religious instruction is an incredible opportunity for making a positive impact on our students. It is open to all faiths. It will allow our students to choose to attend religious instruction during the day, off school property. Allowing this to happen during the school day keeps this program available to all students. Moving it to before or after school hours immediately limits access to this program to only those students that have the ability to get special transportation to attend at those times. This is a religious liberty that our United States Supreme Court has upheld.

Yet, I have found stubborn resistance from our local school board of education in allowing this freedom to our students.

There are many school districts already in Ohio that have allowed release time to function in their schools. The impact on the students has been clearly measurable with better behavior in the students, more connection with adults and overall improvement in the school environment.

Since this is strictly a volunteer program, is held off school property, and has absolutely no cost to the school districts, I would ask that you please consider making this HB 445 law and change the wording of the existing law in the ORC from “may” to “shall” so that parents may exercise this religious freedom when it comes to school districts.

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

Sincerely,
Pastor David DiYanni
Vineyard Community Church