

May 29, 2024

394 Five Points East Road
Mansfield, OH 44903

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 Paul Lintern and I am from Richland County.

I speak in support of giving parents the ultimate decision about their students taking advantage of release-time opportunities, and urge you to make a small but significant change in HB 445 by requiring school districts to allow religious release time when parents request it.

I have watched the phenomenal group of the Lifewise Academy in my county, in which groups of interested parents from across the district and church community draw together to provide moral and character lessons using stories from the Bible, something that was an integral part of American public education for most of the first 200 years of the country's existence.

The immense popularity of this simple model, which is grassroots, well organized, independent of school finance, off campus, and drawing on parental permission, is reflected also in the positive effect on student behavior that district administrations have almost universally recognized. This simple change of one word will allow all parents that benefit for their children.

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

Sincerely,

Paul Lintern