

05/30/2024

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 Angie Swanbeck and I am from Erie County.

I am writing this testimony to advocate for released time for religious courses from public schools during the school day.

I believe that children would benefit in a positive way if allowed to attend religious courses during the school day. It is extremely difficult to be a child in today's culture, with social media and bullying being a real and true everyday problem that they face. Children need to know that they are who God says they are. Being able to leave school for one hour a week to be introduced to God's love through religious instruction has been proven to improve behavior, attendance, and academics.

Many parents desire religious instruction for their children, but do not have access to parochial and private schools where the children can get this type of instruction. It should be up to the parent, not the public school, whether their children can leave school for one hour to get this very beneficial type of learning.

Thanks again for taking the time to review my testimony

*Angie Swanbeck*