

Kathy J. Wurm

May 29, 2024

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

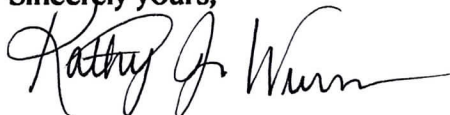
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 445. My name is Kathy Wurm and I am from Crawford County.

I am one of the many parents across the state who have joined the grassroots movement to bring LifeWise Academy to our local school districts. Our small rural community no longer has a religious private school option. Consequently, we have seen a decline in student behavior and mental health. As a substitute teacher in the public school, I see first hand this decline and the need for moral and character development. As a result, I volunteered many hours last summer helping bring LifeWise Academy to our district.

Our local board worked with the school district to allow release time education to occur weekly during grade level teacher planning time. This is an ideal time slot as the students who do not participate in LifeWise Academy are participating in character education lessons. As a substitute teacher, I have helped lead these lessons. Similarly, as a LifeWise volunteer, I have also helped lead LifeWise lessons. The difference, in my opinion, is life changing. LifeWise lessons allow not only for character development, but moral development, too. LifeWise students learn to reflect the character traits of a Holy God and His Son, Jesus. There is tremendous power and opportunity in this that cannot be replicated in the public school lessons.

As a community member, parent, and educator, I believe parents know what is best for their children. They should get to decide whether to include religious education in their student's schedules. This is why I support House Bill 445.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy J. Wurm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Kathy J. Wurm