

November 07, 2024

Carolyn Brommer
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Dear Committee Chair Manning & members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 445. My name is Carolyn Brommer and I am a resident of Bath Township (Akron). I am a retired attorney and federal mediator who is very concerned about the future of our country and our democracy, and the current levels of polarization that are impacting both.

I am submitting this testimony to strenuously oppose the change contained in HB 445. Our public schools have enough challenges without adding one more requirement which could lead to further disruption and distraction from the mission of public education--preparing our next generations for success in life, work, community in an ever more challenging world and environment. Our students need to spend more time together in school working and learning together, not having groups pulled out to create division, and even worse, providing incentives to students (e.g. prizes) to pull more students out and disrupt the school day. While core subjects are not to be disrupted, reports indicate that students return in the middle of other classes, disrupting those classes. These programs can also create more factions based on religious differences, something our currently polarized society definitely does not need.

The decision of whether to release students for religious education should remain as it is--to be made on a case-by-case basis by each community and school board. In some cases, the community may find this to be a beneficial program where in others it may not fit at all. Mandating such a program when certain criteria are met, regardless of the wishes or needs of the local community and school district, does nothing to improve our educational system or advance our state--it does not improve upon the status quo which already allows those districts who want to utilize this type of program to adopt one. Our education system has far greater needs such as finding a constitutional funding system that WILL benefit our state. Please direct our precious legislative resources to the greater good.

I urge you to vote against HB 445—continue to allow our school districts and parents to make the best possible decisions for their communities!

Sincerely,

Carolyn Brommer