

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 11/7/2024

Name: Lynn S. Kline, PhD

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: Associate Professor

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 445

Specific Issue: Require school districts to create a policy to release students during school for religious instruction.

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? written testimony

Please provide a brief statement on your position: Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony against the passage of SB445. I have several concerns about this proposed legislation. I am a proud graduate of Youngstown city schools, The Ohio State University, Youngstown State University and Cleveland State University. I have been a teacher in public schools and a teacher educator for over 50 years and I have never heard a student, parent, teacher or administrator say the students' in-school time is not precious and should be fiercely protected. Rather they suggest that learning would be enhanced by extended school time and days. My concerns are as follows:

The simple change of one word in this bill undermines the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. Such a "minor" change implies that our public schools endorse religious education at taxpayer expense. The children in our family attended religious school in the evening

and on the weekends, so I am not opposed to a family providing religious instruction. If parents want their children to have more religious instruction during the day they could plan for before-or-after school programs or choose home schooling. Parents should be able to manage their children's religious education without state intervention.

The current law provides for school districts to adopt a policy about religious instruction if desired by the community. This bill would remove the flexibility school districts enjoy tailoring their programs to preferences and needs of their students and families. In addition, precious time and resources would be diverted away from core academic content.

With the limited resources available to public schools, this change in wording would require resources to be allocated for transportation to and from the "private entity" which would be devastating for already cash strapped school districts. What funds will be used to support this transportation? What necessary services will not be provided to students and families because the available funds have been diverted to support this transportation.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.