

Opponent Testimony for H.B. 445
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
November 11, 2024

Chair Gayle Manning, Vice Chair Sarah Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Phillip M. Robinson, Jr., and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. My name is Barbara Norris and I reside in Wayne County. I am a retired parent of 2 children who attended Wooster public schools. Not once did I feel a need for them to be provided with released time religious instruction during the school day. Opportunities for religious instruction abound in my community and I see no reason why it needs to be mandated that schools allow for release time during the school day.

I write this in opposition to House Bill 445. I believe in the autonomy of local school boards and this bill undermines this. I also strongly believe that public schools need to maintain neutrality towards religion and this bill will threaten a core principle of our constitution.

The school system my children attended already allows for RTRI and I trust that their decision was made with the best interests of our community in mind. This bill makes unnecessary changes to a program that is already in place. School systems in Ohio that have already decided to not allow for RTRI will be forced to adopt something they have already deemed unnecessary. I urge you to oppose HB 445.

Thank you,

Barbara L. Norris