

**Opponent Testimony for H.B. 445**  
**Primary and Secondary Education Committee**  
**November 12, 2024**

Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Wesley Endicott. I am a parent and Ohio resident with a firm belief in the traditional conservative values of limited government, decentralized authority with local control and constitutional principles. This is why I am submitting my testimony in opposition to [HB 445](#), which unnecessarily seeks to alter the well-established system of Released Time Religious Instruction (RTRI) by changing the permissive “may” to “shall” in Section [3313.6022](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

Why is there a sudden need to change this already established law? What right do state legislators have to dictate local school governance? Communities democratically elect our board of education members for a reason, they know what is best for the students they serve.

When Section 3313.6022 was codified into law in 2014, the 130th General Assembly wisely chose the language “may” instead of “shall” to give local school boards discretion in permitting RTRI. The permissive language was designed to respect the diverse needs and views of individual communities. The current language of the law also reflects the judiciary’s preference for protecting local governance from unnecessary state interference.

Instead of passing mandates down from your ivory tower, please leave important decisions about local school policy to the local school boards and oppose H.B. 445.

Thank you,

Wesley Endicott