

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 11/09/2024

Name: Maureen D. Welch

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

Organization (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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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): HB445

Specific Issue: Regards school policies for release 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 only - will not be present

Please provide a brief statement on your position: I am sending written testimony regarding HB455, Regards school policies for release for religious instruction.

As a citizen that pays taxes that fund our public schools, I have the following concerns.

Removing students from the classroom is disruptive to the participating students, the instruction process, other students, and the school community at large. Continuity in in instruction in the schools is imperative, regularly missing classes is not acceptable.

Parents who want their students in religious education have the option of attending the church of their choice, which may also include religious study groups which are age appropriate. Parents may also choose after school activities that include the religious instruction of their choice.

Safety and the knowledge of exactly what students are participating in during school hours is imperative. I see no requirement that those who transport, have contact with, and instruct the participating students have background checks, training in instruction and curriculum, age appropriate concepts, or have emergency action plans in place. This raised red flags.

The idea that High School students would be able to earn credit for religious instruction of unknown content and format is ludicrous. A survey of age appropriate of world religion is appropriate for credit.

I ask that you do NOT require school systems to have a policy allowing students to be released during school hours for religious instruction. Instead require that religious instruction, if offered, be an after school activity off of school property and arranged by the parents. This places an administrative burden on the schools, is disruptive, and dilutes the education of all of our students.

Vote against HB445

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen D. Welch

*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.*