

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 445
Primary and Secondary Education Committee
November 11, 2024

Kristy Piper
Music Educator
Church Musician

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kristy Piper. I am a music educator with twenty-five years of teaching experience. I am writing to oppose House Bill 445.

As a music educator, I have a very limited time to work with my students. During my music classes we sing, play instruments, move meaningfully to music, and prepare for concerts. I use the Ohio State Music Standards to prepare and plan my lessons. My school enrollment is over 500 students. I see a third of the students weekly, and this rotation lasts for three weeks. My biggest concern about Lifewise Academy is that students may be pulled from my class to attend Lifewise classes. With my limited time seeing my students, I do not know how I would be able to teach my class with fidelity. Instead, I would be constantly making up missed content to students who have missed my classes. This would delay my ability to teach the entirety of the Ohio Music Standards, and would also reduce the number of performances. Currently, every student performs in two concerts a year that span the entire school year. These concerts provide a unique opportunity for family engagement and community relations.

In addition to my teaching duties, I serve as the music director for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, an ELCA Lutheran congregation in Brunswick, Ohio. As a Christian, I have severe concerns over the content of the Lifewise curriculum. My congregation welcomes all members, whether they be straight, gay, married, or divorced. The Lifewise curriculum states that it is a sin to be gay, a sin to live with someone outside of marriage, and a sin to be divorced. These are not the teachings of Jesus Christ, but rather a radical, evangelical group that has taken the words of Christ and the Bible out of context.

Finally, I have concerns over the background check process for Lifewise employees and volunteers. As an educator, I am required to pass BCI/FBI criminal background checks on a rotating basis. I believe that Lifewise volunteers should be held to the same standard. Even parent volunteers who work with students in my school district have to pass the same background check as all educators.

I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on House Bill 445.

Sincerely,

Kristy A. Piper

Music Educator
Church Musician