

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

Rachel Reid

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 testify. My name is Rachel Reid. I am a parent of 2 elementary age children in the Revere Local School system, I live in Richfield, Ohio. I am writing to express my opposition to [HB 445](#), which 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. I believe this unnecessary bill threatens the autonomy of local school boards and undermines constitutional principles. I urge you to oppose this legislation for several key reasons:

This bill is unnecessary. Children have time to get religious instruction outside of school time, my children go to Sunday school at one of our local churches and it is easily managed on Sunday. Leaving no impact on their school hours and education.

I am concerned that forcing schools to adapt a policy will open the door to other groups that can pull children out of school and eventually may undermine our public school system. Local school boards should be allowed to gauge their local communities need for such a policy.

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. This flexible approach allows locally elected school boards to decide what is in the best interest of their students and administration while not mandating schools to accommodate a forced implementation of religious instruction. The current language of the law also reflects the judiciary’s preference for protecting local governance from unnecessary state interference.

Please consider my testimony and oppose H.B. 445. Please leave important decisions about when to adopt policy to the local school boards.