

**Opponent Testimony for HOUSE BILL 445**  
**Primary & Secondary Education Committee**  
**11/9/24**

**JOCELYN HARPER, K-12 EDUCATOR**

Chairwoman Manning and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is JOCELYN HARPER. I am an educator in the state of Ohio with 10 years of experience and I wish to express concern regarding House Bill 445 and the potential negative impact it may have on Ohio's K-12 students.

As a K-12 educator, I connect with many youth daily from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, I am a proud Jewish woman. As such, it is extremely important to me that everyone's religious views are given space at the proverbial table and are equally respected.

A bill requiring schools to allow RTRI to take place during school hours potentially infringes on the right of students to feel included and respected at school, as many RTRI programs focus on Christianity and present the message to students that non-Christian students are following a wrong path and in danger of eternal damnation. Many RTRI programs also promote harmful ideologies which ostracize queer, trans, and questioning students. Further, in my own community, RTRI has led to the harassment and bullying of Jewish students who choose (for obvious reasons) not to participate. This issue has caught the attention of not only rabbis in the community but imams, and other Christian clergy who do not wish to have their faith attached to such negative and harmful programming.

Again, the purpose of my testimony is to advocate for the protection of students and for a climate that is respectful of all beliefs, and as such. I'm asking the committee to reconsider this harmful legislation.

Thank you for your time,

Jocelyn Harper