

Opponent Testimony for H.B. 445
November 10, 2024

Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

I wish to express opposition to the proposed legislation H.B. 445 that would force school districts to accommodate Release Time Religious Instruction (RTRI).

RTRI can unduly burden school staff with administrative overhead. Only the school boards and schools themselves understand whether they have adequate resources to ensure that the children are in the proper places at the proper times.

Furthermore, forcing districts to accommodate RTRI could lead to liability issues. Is there sufficient oversight available to ensure that organizations are meeting legal requirements and providing safe transportation and nourishment to the students?

Removing students during regular school hours deprives students of academic instruction, or other equally important life lessons. Who is to say that the hours claimed are less important than others, whether that occurs during Art, Gym, Recess, or some other activity?

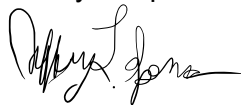
Finally, the RTRI programs can create feelings of exclusion with the students. These programs, which are business driven, are incentivized to recruit students, even students that do not share a faith with the organization. Our school systems should strive to keep academic environments free of these complications.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please oppose H.B. 445 and leave these decisions to the local school boards.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey L. Spencer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey L. Spencer", written in a cursive style.