

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: November 10, 2024

Name: Linda Wagner

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

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

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

Address: 9757 Hoover Woods Road

City: Galena State: Ohio Zip: 43021

Best Contact Telephone: 614-596-8570 Email: ltwagner9@aol.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 445

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 only

Please provide a brief statement on your position: Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Arthur, Ranking Member Fowler and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Thank you for considering this testimony provided in opposition to HB 445.

Religion and religious instruction is important to many families in Ohio. This does not mean that this instruction should happen during the public school day. Programs like Lifewise that are only (by design) offered during the school day are disruptive to families who do not choose to enroll their children in such a program. I have tried to understand the argument that these programs can only be successful if they happen during the school day, but that makes no sense at all to me.

Each individual school district is currently permitted to evaluate for themselves whether the environment in their community can withstand this disruption, or whether it puts too great a stress on teachers, staff, and the full student population. Several school districts have initially allowed this program to trial in the community and found that they had to withdraw the position because the burden on the full school community was too great. The bill being proposed would take the autonomy away from individual school districts to make these decisions and mandate that programs such as Lifewise be allowed. For some districts, this might compromise The ability of individual districts to provide a first rate public education to their enrolled students.

For these reasons, I am opposed to HB 445 and I urge the members of the committee to reject this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Linda Wagner

9757 Hoover Woods Road

Galena, OH 43021

*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.*