

Chair Brenner~

Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 293.

My name is Rachel Matthews and I am from Erie County.

My girls have been attending & my husband & I helping our Community Life Wise for 2 years now. We have witnessed 1st hand the Amazing Positive impact on Children involved in these Programs. We have also witnessed how the Students have positively impacted their Communities through what they are learning in these Programs.

Just a few short months ago, I was able to be a part of a change in a young man's life through this great opportunity. He gave his heart to Christ & changed his world, along with those around him in AMAZING ways before the end of the school year last year. He unfortunately, tragically & unexpectedly lost his life over summer break, but continues to change our tight knit Community to this day with his Testimony that he left behind. Through his family's Community outreaches & his very own words left behind in his Journal through this Program, his Legacy is forever in all of our hearts!

It greatly hurts our hearts to see other Communities struggling to have the same opportunity. We have close relationships with families that desperately want time-released religious instruction available for their Communities, but it is being stopped for reasons out of the family's control.

We believe strongly that Senate Bill 293, putting the choice in the parents hands, not school administrators, will help our friends & other, less fortunate communities to have the amazing opportunity that we are so grateful to have!

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for Senate Bill 293!

Sincerely, Rachel Matthews