

Dear 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 James (Jim) E. Kemper and I am from Hocking County.

I am a strong supporter of SB 293 and passionately believe in the efficacy of Released Time Religious Instruction. We are seeing it 'work' well and effectively in Logan and Hocking County. For example, for two years now we have collected school year-end data from both the parents of our RTRI students and the teachers in the schools. The teachers indicate (~80%) that our students are 'making better decisions' inside their classrooms at schools. And 96% of the parents 'recommend' the program to other parents.

We - our culture - desperately need future citizens/leaders/employees/parents who fully embrace the very character traits we teach in our RTRI program. Courage. Honesty. Integrity. Generosity. Humility. And dozens more. As a retired chief human resource officer for three different higher education institutions in Ohio I can speak first hand on the need for these character traits not only in our educational institutions, but in our families and in our workplaces. Employers (who hired our students) year-in-and-year out reported that our college/university graduates have wonderful technical skills but are deficient in the 'soft skills' such as teamwork, work ethic, and respect. As an RTRI provider we can - and do - come alongside our public school educators by filling a gap that is recognizable not only by our educators at all levels but also by our employers.

Last, it is also important to recognize that RTRI requires parental permission. It is important to allow the parents the opportunity - the choice - to take part in this educational endeavor that builds better behaving children for our parents and builds upstanding citizens for Ohio's future.

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

Sincerely,

Jim E. Kemper