

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 Lois Carter and I am from Knox County.

As a mother of 5 adult children and 19 grandchildren I am thrilled that schools are providing release time for LifeWise Academy. So thrilled that I volunteer with two schools in our county to help with the program. Children struggle with so many problems in our current culture. Moral and religious education serves as an anchor to give them a solid foundation for who they are and what their purpose is. I love that so many character virtues are illustrated in the Bible lessons and the breakout activities. The children seem to love the classes and are eager to learn.

As the Knox County Good News Club Coordinator, I have the privilege of teaching After School Bible Clubs - which are fine programs. However, many parents who would love for their children to attend these weekly classes, are not able to do so because of schedule conflicts. School Release Time makes Moral and Religious Education accessible to all children avoiding the after school scheduling issues.

Parents should have the authority to decide if religious education is part of their child's schooling. SB 293 makes religious education accessible to all students, without burdening the school or taxpayer. Children who grow up with moral and religious education will be more likely to become upright, productive citizens.

Please say yes to SB 293. Our children and communities will reap the benefits!

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

Sincerely,

Lois Carter