

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 Lindsay Mauter, and I am from Delaware County.

Parents have a right to walk alongside their children in their educational journey. We are invited into parent-teacher conferences, active in PTAs, classroom volunteers, and voters who upload school levies. Parents are expected to be advocates for our children to ensure they receive an equitable educational experience that betters them as a whole person.

For this reason, Ohio Needs SB 293. Protected by a Supreme Court ruling, students have a right to be released during school hours for religious instruction with parental approval. Today, we have districts in Central Ohio denying parents' requests to release their children for religious instruction. Statewide consistency is needed; we must align school districts through SB 293.

Parents care about access to religious instruction and should have the authority to decide if religious education is part of their child's schooling. Religious instruction positively impacts students' mental health, behavior, and academic performance. School districts are choosing superficial reasons and political agendas to eliminate these released time religious instruction opportunities. This needs to change.

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

Sincerely,
Lindsay Mauter