

“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 Nikki Chandler and I am from Adams County.”

As a grandparent and educator, I believe it is important that I have the right to choose released time for religious instruction for my children and grandchildren. As an educator I see the difference it makes in behavior, character development and most importantly the self-worth the students are bringing back to the classroom.

As a grandparent I want my grandchildren to learn relationship skills, and how to care for others around them. This is what Lifewise Academy does. It shows the students that they are to care for themselves and others. They are responsible not for only themselves, they are responsible for their communities.

Decades of research indicate that religious instruction positively affects student behavior, academic performance, and mental health. A recent independent study by Thomas P. Miller & Associates found that LifeWise programs improve attendance and behavior in participating schools.

As a Middle School educator I have heard from the Elementary Educators how much of a difference this program has had on attendance and behavior. The biggest obstacles we face as educators are attendance and behavior. If the students are present and active in class then their knowledge increases. If students have chronic absences and behavior is causing disruptions in the class then everyone, not only the student causing the issues loses knowledge.

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

Sincerely,

Nikki Chandler

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