

Hello Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Anna Gehres. I am a lifelong citizen of Ohio and a proud parent of two children who attend public schools. I care deeply about education – not just my own children's but all the children of Ohio. I am a public educator myself and a daughter of a high school teacher.

I have concerns about SB 293 which I will outline here for your consideration:

- **Burden on school districts:** Our amazing teachers and staff already are tapped to their max potential. By placing this additional legislative requirement on to our districts, we will be additionally burdening both teachers and staff to accommodate disruptions in the school day. Schools with RTRI report challenges with managing these programs including getting students out/into classes, providing lunches, ensuring safety, etc. While the legislation does not allow for school personnel to be involved in the religious instructions, school personnel will ABSOLUTELY need to be involved in the implementation of RTRI programs. Anyone who has witnessed getting kids on a bus for a field trip is aware this is no simple task.

- **Taking power away from local school districts:** This bill would take away the power of local school districts, governed by elected school boards, to decide what is right for their own school district. It places a mandate on school districts that takes away from the ideals of local governance.

If these programs would like to operate, perhaps they could consider what so many religious groups already do by providing after school programs. This not only helps working parents, but it also ensures that proper safety regulations are followed to protect Ohio students through School Age Child Care Licensing. Ohio parents are REQUIRED to send their children to school, school only happens when school happens. Disruptions for both staff and students should be minimized, not increased by a state mandate.

Religious education can happen at other times including before/after school and weekends. And to the parent who can't get their child to religious education, they should request their religious organization to start a before or afterschool program or provide transportation on an alternative day.

I hope you will thoughtfully consider the burden this mandate would cause on school districts. By rejecting this bill, you will allow school districts the opportunity to decide if RTRI is appropriate for their school district.

I will close with my faith. I practice my faith on Sunday mornings where I volunteer my time and knowledge to provide free medical care to underserved populations. I am called to do this, but I do it on my own time.

Thank you, Chair Brenner, and members of the committee, for allowing me to submit written testimony in opposition to SB 293.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.

Most respectfully,

Anna Gehres, PharmD, RPh, BCACP Associate Professor - Practice