

Rick Haberkamp  
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Nov. 15, 2024

Re: SB 293 Testimony

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 Rick Haberkamp and I am from Franklin County.

We want you to protect our rights as parents and guardians of our children and grandchildren to see that our children grow up into moral and sound men and women, able to contribute health and well-being to the American society. My wife and I are not the only ones who desire moral and character education for public school students; a 2024 RMG research poll revealed that 76% of voters also want that for their children. Also, parents in more than 200 Ohio school districts have advocated for released time programs for their schools.

We hear often how the students of today are suffering with high rates of anxiety, depression, and fear. The numbers go up each year showing that kids are not getting help for this in today's school systems. Released time Bible instruction programs demonstrate that they help kids to discover a solid foundation of faith and love, and moral and character education.

ORC 3313.6022 allows schools to prohibit access to released time programs if a few administrators deem the program unnecessary. Some school boards seem to be caving in to a few loud voices. Senate Bill 293 gives the right to the parents, not the schools, to choose such a program for their school district. No parent is forced to send their child to released time if they prefer not to; to send their child to such classes, the parents must opt the child in. But if a school board vetos the classes, parents have been denied the choice; this is unfair.

These are just some of the reasons we are asking you to support and pass SB 293 this legislative session.

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

Sincerely, Rick Haberkamp