

November 15, 2024

SB 293

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 Julie Closson and I am from Allen county.

The Supreme Court ruling, *Zorach vs. Clauson*, was established to allow children to leave school (separation of church and state) with the permission of a parent in order to attend religious education classes. No public funds are to be used for this purpose.

This right, in Ohio, is being denied by some schools through the actions of its board members.

My husband and extended family have over 100 years as teachers and administrators in the state of Ohio. Our community of Bluffton Exempted Village Schools has had a Released Time program that just celebrated its 100th year. This program has been only a positive influence for our school and community.

Every person who runs for the School Board has an agenda...sports, programs, etc that they want supported...or a program or administrator they want removed. Their ultimate job is to serve the community, school, teachers, and to have the best interest of the children as their main goal. They should not have the ability to block parental choice that does not violate Federal or State guidelines on separation of church and state.

By supporting SB 293, you are simply giving parents and communities the right to choose if they want a program in their district. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for this bill.

Sincerely,
Julie Closson