

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 Elizabeth Eddy and I am from Licking County."

I am a permanently certified science teacher for the state of Ohio and have been teaching chemistry for over 40 years, retiring from Westerville South High School in 2020. I have also been a LifeWise teacher for almost a year now at Northridge Elementary. Excellence in teaching is very important to me, which is one of the reasons why I volunteer one day a week to teach this life-affirming curriculum to the K-5 students at Northridge. With absolutely no cost to the schools or taxpayers, here is an optional program for the children to learn how to cope in a healthy way with the difficulties in life, and to learn that their lives are meaningful and that they are cherished individuals.

I attended the Westerville's BOE meetings when they decided to disclude RTRI programs from their district. One of the testimonies came from a gay man who claimed we were teaching children to hate "people like me." I'm quite certain that man never saw our curriculum which consistently teaches the children to love others, no matter if they have different opinions from ours or not. Another woman said she wanted the board to drop RTRI because she said, "What am I supposed to tell my four-year-old when she says, 'Mommy, I want to ride on that red bus.'?" Obviously, this is a problem for a parent who wishes to be a child's friend, but not an excuse to disallow the almost 300 children who were already participating in LifeWise in Westerville.

I also attended the board meetings in the Johnstown Monroe district, where 300-400 residents of Johnstown were ready and waiting to implement LifeWise with many eager children, only to be blocked by board members who voted to disallow RTRI in the district and refused to give their reasons for doing so to the packed crowd of LifeWise supporters who came to the meetings. While 20-30 people gave testimony in support of RTRI in Johnstown, not one person from the community stepped forward to support the board's decision at the time.

If you could please pass Senate Bill 293, this would allow the majority of parents to choose a free, optional program to enrich their children's lives and prevent petty individuals from blocking them out of this choice because they don't want it for their children, and therefore don't want it for anyone's children.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for Senate Bill 293.
Sincerely,
Elizabeth Eddy