

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 Jenny Petersen and I am from Carroll County, and work with youth in Stark, Tuscarawas and Carroll Counties. I have an education background and currently serve teaching Anatomy and Physiology at a homeschool cooperative for fun while primarily serving youth as a youth pastor at the East Canton Church of God in East Canton, Ohio.

I urge the members of the Senate Education Committee to consider the importance of providing parents the choice and responsibility of released time religious instruction. This right belongs to the parents and provides students with positive opportunities for growth. Limiting opportunities for our families and children is the opposite of the vision of education and cannot be based on an individual's preferences or biases.

Please continue your work on SB 293 and do not delay as the rights of parents are being attacked each day. Stand firm – whether religious or not - in providing opportunities for our kids and defending the rights of parents to make these decisions for their children.

I have experienced first-hand the impact that mentoring provides our children and the Judeo Christian principles and characteristics that are modeled, encouraged and developed that lead to students maturing and becoming citizens that contribute positively to our society.

Lastly, be encouraged and run the race with endurance, keeping your eye on the mark so that when you are done you can say I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. We understand you withstand criticism daily, but keep pressing forward in what is best for our children and their families.

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

Sincerely,

Jennifer Petersen