

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Karen Gedeon. I am a Christian, middle school media specialist who has raised two wonderful children, both of whom have gone through public schools right here in Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 455.

Our country was founded on the separation of church and state. Allowing students to leave a public school for religious services removes that separation. If parents choose to have their children receive religious education during the school day they have the option to send them to private religious institutions. Parents also have the option to utilize religious education programs offered through their church.

Secondly, study after study has proven the best way for students to excel in their education is to be in school. When a student is absent for any reason their grades (aka state test scores) suffer. With such a push at the state level to improve reading ability and improve attendance rates, I struggle to understand why our legislature would even consider another reason for students to not be in class.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

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Karen Gedeon

OELMA Past President

OELMA Advocacy Committee member

"School libraries are the foundation of our culture - not luxuries." Laurie Halse Anderson