

Testimony opposing SB293

I am opposed to SB293 which would negatively affect the education of our young citizens and which also would ultimately negatively affect the business environment of our state due to a lack of ready work force. Here are my reasons that support this statement.

1. SB293 would create the opportunity for **unlimited interruptions of the school day** if multiple “religious private entities” seize the opportunity to take students from the school during the school day. Religion is defined as the belief in and worship of a superhuman power or powers, the pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance. A school board would not take the risk of choosing one religious group over the other for fear of being sued all the way up to the Supreme Court. Nor, are school boards charged or equipped to make judgement calls on what group is legit and which groups are not. **SB293 fails in its ability to be executed.**
2. **Interruptions to the school day fracture the culture and environment necessary** to maintain the focus of twenty plus 5-18 year-olds in a classroom. Imagine the chaos of multiple children coming back all pumped up on sugar and celebration. During a speech during the April recent OSBA Legislative Day, *Governor DeWine shared the statistic of cell phones that if a student picks up the cellphone from the desk to view-only, it takes 20 minutes for the distraction to wane and refocus on schoolwork.* He went on to state that if the student interacts with the phone, it is a 50-minute time period for the distraction to wane and return to focus. I will submit to you as a parent, Girl Scout leader, and Sunday School teacher that if several children return from being away from the group that the time needed to return those children’s ability to focus on school work is probably 90 minutes - based on the cell phone study statistics. So, the practical time lost from the school day is really 150 minutes....a substantial part of the elementary school day. If cell phones are a distraction, releasing students for a totally different experience then returning as a group is a mighty distraction. **HB250 passed unanimously to eliminate distraction from cell phones in schools – Sb293’s core is the same, therefore it should unanimously be defeated.**
3. **Teachers and the schools are being asked to perform a parental duty.** Public schools are not to teach a particular religion for adoption by the student. Facilitating the education of a religion for adoption by the student is too close to being the former and should not be thrust upon our teachers and staff. Parents have options: choose a religion-based school, have the religious group pick up students at the end of the school day, or use the school building prior to or after the school day. Options are available. The local LifeWise leader met with our superintendent and refused the offer of building use without consideration. So, it isn’t about religious education. It is about disrupting the school day to hurt public education.

Over and over, businesses choose to stay or to locate in Ohio because we have a strong education system producing competent and loyal employees. Efforts like SB293 will harm our education system and future of Ohio with the open-ended invitation for all types of religions to take advantage of the school-day opportunity; disruptions to student focus and class dynamics destroy the ability to educate to the fullest; and finally, parents and the private religious entities have many other options other than during the school day.

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