

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 John Reed and I am from Lucas County.

I have been aware and involved with Life Wise for the past 2 years. My feelings are very simple, God is giving us another opportunity to spread the "Word". I am 77 and have the blessing of remembering simpler and friendlier times of the past. Now I often say I glad I am old because I see the path moving forward and I would not want to travel it.

God used to be a focus in our lives and guided our thoughts and actions. But now the ability to explore the "Word" has been taken away from the public schools by "progressive ideas". Opposition to Life Wise appears organized and largely unsupported by facts, stemming from anti-religious or differing religious groups.

Here are a few of the reasons I support this bill and Life Wise program:

- By passing SB 293 this legislative session, Ohio can empower parents, enrich students' lives, and strengthen school communities. It's time for Ohio to ensure that parental choice—not school officials—determines access to released time religious instruction. Parents should decide what's best for their own children, without limiting choices for others.
- SB 293 allows access for all faiths, with parental permission, to organize released time programs. This change will also benefit many of the objectors of Life Wise.
- I truly believe results of research indicate that religious instruction positively affects student behavior, academic performance, and mental health. Anything we can do to help the mental health of our children will positively affect our communities.

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

Sincerely,
John Reed