

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 Steven Kretzer. I am a parent, former volunteer coach for multiple community sports programs, and a small business owner. I was born and raised in Central Ohio, and I was brought up in the evangelical church, so I have extensive knowledge of what they teach. I strongly oppose SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445.

Taking children out of school during the day is disruptive to not only the removed students, but also to those who remain. Children can attend off-campus religious indoctrination, then return to proselytize to their fellow students, who, since they are required to be at school, have no choice but to listen. They are a captive audience.

I have first-hand experience with the dangerous and frightening dogma that evangelical churches teach, and it has no place in a public school. If parents want to expose their children to religion, that is their right. But it needs to be done outside of school hours. Allowing school-release for this purpose will only open a Pandora's Box. One wonders how LifeWise (or similar group) parents will react when atheist students want to be released from school, or Church of Satan students.

The bottom line is that release from school for religious training is an unAmerican attack on the separation of church and state.

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