

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 Tesia Forbes. I am a 41-year-old mother to two kids in the Worthington School District. I am strongly opposed to SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445.

While there are many reasons that I am opposed to SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445, the most basic of reasons is that I believe that school policies for release for religious instruction should be left up to the local school boards. This is why we elect members to serve on our school board, to make these sorts of decisions for our individual school districts. Beyond that, religious release time programs disrupt the school day, it creates a divide between students who participate and students who don't, and it interferes with religious freedom. If one of the purposes of this bill is to leave the decision to participate in religious release time programs up to the parents, then why are we not just making parents educate their children with their religious preferences after school hours.

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

Tesia Forbes