

November 16th 2024

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 Paula Purcell. I am from Franklin County.

I kindly ask you to consider moving Senate Bill 293 forward as quickly as possible. My children are currently involved in a time-released religious program. I am grateful for that opportunity, as moral education is just as important to our family as academic education. Parent's rights are very much under attack right now and schools are choosing to make the decision for the parents what is best regarding time released religious programing, which is very concerning. The purpose of a time released religious program is intended to not a burden for a school district but instead a blessing and a resource that accentuates what the school district is already doing.

Time released religious programs are designed to be privately funded and organized and children attend the program during non-instructional time in the school classroom (ie. lunchtime, recess, study hall etc). LifeWise, the time released religious program that my children attend has a teaching curriculum that focuses on a character trait each week (ie. respect, gratefulness, kindness, integrity etc). Due to the moral education that these programs provide, research has shown that time-released religious programs positively affect school attendance, classroom behavior, mental health and academic performance. As parents, we would like to equip our children with this kind of moral education that will lead to these kind of successful academic and personal outcomes.

We kindly ask that SB 293 bill is moved forward in the Senate quickly so that parents can have a choice in their children's education. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for Senate Bill 293.

Sincerely,
Paula Purcell