

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 Mike Stickney and I am from the City of Columbus in Upper Arlington.

Released Time Religious Instruction offers parents the opportunity to choose religious education for their children during school hours, reinforcing their constitutional right to direct their children's religious upbringing. This program transforms school culture in a positive way that enriches in many ways the importance of self-awareness, spirituality, hope and higher meaning and purpose. These classes are held off school grounds, without using public funds, thus respecting the separation of church and state.

The proposed SB293 would enhance the existing law, encouraging districts to support parental choice and accommodate diverse religious needs while maintaining educational responsibilities.

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

Gratefully,

Mike Stickney