

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 Sara Spath and I am from Van Wert County.

I am the mother of five children, ages 12 to 22 years old and I am a veteran of the U.S. Navy. I grew up in Van Wert County, graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1998, served in the U.S. Navy for five years, and returned to Van Wert to raise my family.

For many years, I homeschooled our five children, but ultimately decided to enroll them in the public school system, in large part because of the opportunity for them to attend religious classes as part of their school day.

My husband is a public school educator and we see firsthand the impact that religion has on the well-being and education of our own children and the children of our community. Our school district is stronger, more effective, and more appealing because of the released time program offered in it.

Parents should unquestionably be given the right to allow their children to attend religious classes as part of their school day. It is a freedom for which I served and upon which I made educational decisions for my children.

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

Sincerely,
Sara Spath