

Chairman 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 Terrance Castor MD, and I am from Delaware County.

I am writing in support of this Bill. As background, I am a retired Internal Medicine Physician and founding member of Central Ohio Primary Care Physicians, Inc. In my retirement I have devoted time and money toward supporting LifeWise Academy. I have attended and spoken at School Board Meetings in Hilliard and Westerville on behalf of LifeWise Academy. I have heard disinformation about LifeWise and heard the reasons for not initially allowing LifeWise in Hilliard and the reasons put forward for discontinuing it in Westerville. In both cases I find the reasons to not be solidly grounded in fact and based primarily based on anti-parent rights and anti-Christian perspective.

I believe the core issues are the legality of the LifeWise program and the rights of parents to choose whether to enroll their children in LifeWise or not. I do not believe that there can be any question of the value of the program both to children enrolled and to society in general as the Biblical character values taught by LifeWise are foundational to the virtue development needed in a healthy democracy. The program continues to multiply rapidly and is opening in more and more states. The legality of the program has already been determined by the US Supreme Court.

We are then left with the question of whether School Boards or parents have the final say in whether children can attend LifeWise during school hours. I strongly believe that it should be the parents

and not the School Boards. From my experience, School Board Decisions around LifeWise appear to be based on the political makeup of the school board. Making the simple wording change in the law from “may have a release time religious education program” to “shall have a religious release time religious education program” will make it possible for parents to have the final say and not School Boards. Without a doubt it seems to me that this is the fairest way and consistent with the basic Constitutional right in this country for parents to have the ability to make choices for how their children are raised.

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

Sincerely,

Terrance Castor MD