

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 Gretchen Chan and I am from Franklin County.

As a parent of children who attend LifeWise Academy, I cannot understand why RTRI would be taken away from them. My children have absolutely loved their time with LifeWise, quoting it as, "the best day of the school week!" I have seen a change in their behavior at home and in their character development. They come home talking to me about qualities that can help them be the best version of themselves. As a parent who very much believes in the importance of parental choice, it seems that taking away a good and positive program like LifeWise would be detrimental to our first amendment rights and the rights of parents. This program has nothing to do with any students that don't attend. It disrupts no one as it is taken off campus and done during a student's lunch and recess, an already busy time during the public school day.

LifeWise is a beautiful manifestation of the separation of church and state. Students are taken off school grounds, taught Bible based character education and returning them back to school. The Supreme Court, the highest court in the land ruled on this, in 1952 that 3 criteria are met. 1. That a program be off school grounds. 2. That it be privately funded, and, 3. That the program be parent permitted. LifeWise Academy meets all three criteria making this particular RTRI program completely legal.

Please don't take away this great program that brings my family so much joy. It's my choice to send my children. If parents aren't interested in this type of program for their child, they don't have to sign them up. No one is forcing this on any child.

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

Sincerely,
Gretchen Chan