

Good afternoon Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and distinguished members of the Senate Education Committee.

I am writing to express my concerns about SB 293. I am a parent to two school aged children in Summit County. I am an involved parent who works homecoming dances, book fairs, attends conferences and supervises field trips.

While my concerns are numerous concerning this bill, to keep it brief I will focus on the disruption to the school day.

Governor DeWine has promoted research that if a student momentarily looks at their cell phone, it takes 20 minutes for that student's distraction to wane. And if they interact with their cell phone it takes 50 minutes for their distraction to wane. If a student leaves for an RTRI program, how long would it take for that student to get back on task? If you have ever supervised a field trip of elementary school students, you would know that it is impossible to get them to focus on learning when they return. In fact, getting them out the door in a quiet, organized manner that does not disrupt the remaining student body can prove difficult as well.

What happens if a non-traditional religion wants to come in and bring an RTRI program to the school district? For example, if the Church of Wicca, Satanic Temple, Jehovah's Witnesses or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints wants to come in - what would stop them? How much distraction is acceptable in the school day? The focus should be on education. Not religion - particularly in a public school. There are many parochial schools throughout Ohio that can accommodate religious education. Ohio is rife with churches and opportunities for bible study and worship. Sunday schools are offered at every church. These programs can also operate before or after school. It's not that I am anti-faith. I am anti-disrupting the school day.

Ohio ranks 30/50 in education in the US. (<https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/school-education-state-rank-best-worst-b2586035.html>) Is pulling kids out of school for religion a way to bring that up? When they missed a "specials" class and now are going into math or science and can't get back on task, how is that going to help Ohio's abysmal 60% score? I know I am not happy when my kids bring home a 60% on a test and I am not happy that Ohio ranks 30/50 for education. Further, the courses that are proposed that they miss (music, library, STEM, PE, art) create well-rounded students and help them find their interests and passion.

For these reasons I am asking you not to pass this bill.

Thank you,

Brooke Gorbach