

Nov 18, 2024

Dear Senators,

I am writing to you regarding SB 293, which would require all school districts to allow religious education during the school day. **I am strongly opposed to moving SB 293.**

I am both a Christian and a proud member of my public school community and PTA in Worthington. I have never had so much as a single problem being both proud of my religion and proud of my kids' public school. And in fact, I believe—as our founding fathers believed—that this nation is much better off when we keep the two separate. I have no issue with celebrating my faith with my children outside of school hours, nor can I think of any good reason that RTRI during school hours should be allowed or encouraged.

I encourage the state to allow Boards of Education to determine what is best for each of our communities, especially on the issue of RTRI. Our exceptional and dedicated teachers are already working incredibly long and challenging hours to meet the needs of our students, and having every minute of the day to do so is critical. A significant disruption such as RTRI does not help our teachers, administrators, or students. We adopted a cell phone policy against just such distractions, for a host of excellent reasons. We need to block RTRI for the same reasons.

I urge you to remember your responsibility to represent the whole of the population of Ohio. And for this bill and every similar bill to come, I urge you to remember that our ancestors died so that we could all worship as we please without state-sanctioned religion and the oppression and division it causes. Separation of church and state is one of the greatest freedoms ever written into any legal document, and it is a hallmark of our nation. Please hear the voices of those who stand firm on that freedom.

Thank you for your time.

Ann Bourke Shank  
Worthington, OH