

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 Annette Stewart and I am from Darke County•

I am a volunteer with the Lifewise program at Arcanum-Butler local school. I have seen the excitement these students have coming to Lifewise each week. I've heard comments from them how much they love the program.

I've also heard positive remarks from the parents and teachers: how their kids don't want to miss and the teachers remark the students act better in class and treat others more kindly.

The program does help with character building which is a trait and quality we all need and can benefit from. Some children in Ohio and really everywhere come from broken homes and all kinds of difficult situations. I remember one student asking for prayer as his mother was in prison. Very sad but thankful as volunteers we were there to love and support the child. To let them know we care.

I would ask for your support concerning the importance of all parents having the opportunity to choose released time religious instruction for their child.

As a parent, grandparent, Lifewise and community volunteer, we encourage your support of this important topic.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
Annette Stewart