

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 Lori Snedecor and I am from Delaware County.

I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of Release Time Religious Instruction programs in our Ohio public schools. Recent data highlights an overwhelming demand from parents for such initiatives. According to a 2024 national poll by RMG Research, a significant 76% of voters are in favor of incorporating moral and character education into the public school curriculum. This trend is evidenced by numerous movements across hundreds of school districts where parents have actively sought to establish released time programs. However, it is concerning that some school districts have been denying parents access to these valuable programs, limiting the educational choices available to them.

Furthermore, the positive impact of released time religious instruction on students and schools cannot be overstated. Decades of research consistently demonstrate that religious instruction significantly enhances student behavior, academic performance, and mental health. An independent study by Thomas P. Miller & Associates on schools served by LifeWise Academy found notable improvements in attendance and behavior among students who participated in these programs. By supporting Release Time Religious Instruction, we are not only respecting parental choice but also fostering an environment conducive to the holistic development of our students.

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

Sincerely,

Lori Snedecor