

Hello.

I am an MD PhD mother of 5 children ages 6-14 who previously attended only catholic school until last year and now are enrolled in UA public schools and I write to you to demand that "Lifewise" bill be blocked.

I support complete separation of church and state. Under no circumstances should children be permitted to leave school grounds regularly to obtain religious instruction during the regular academic day which risks disruption in the curricular plan for students in the class as a whole. Leaving school to attend a religious service on a holy day that is not recognized by the school district is a completely different and acceptable excused absence, for which this policy was initially intended. By following the logic that the school district now SHALL allow these absences which permits them to occur regularly for the sake of religious reasons, this could be applied to anything one deemed religious (my children need to train or practice extra during the school day regularly as this is part of how we serve God by pursuing our talents). This is simply absurd.

On the contrary, outside of the holy day that needs observed for whatever religion one practices, missing school regularly for religious instruction should be illegal. If religious instruction is required daily by a family during school hours, in this country you have the freedom to attend a RELIGIOUS school, where this is part of the school day and disruptive to no one.

My witness slip will follow in a separate email.

Vanessa Olcese