

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

Thank you for reading my testimony in opposition to SB 293 and HB 445.

My name is Malia Lewis. I am Vice President of the Board of Education for Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District. I am also the proud parent of two class of 2019 Heights High graduates. I strongly oppose SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445.

Both of these bills undermine the structure of the school day, deprive children of important parts of their education, and create visible groups of haves and have-nots within classrooms.

In my school district we instituted universal breakfast and lunch in order to remove the stigma of some students being of Free and Reduced Lunch and other students paying for their school lunch. This had immediate and noticeable effects on children's feeling of comfort and sense of belonging in the lunch room and in school.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights is renowned for our music programs, both instrumental and vocal, and our visual arts programs (pottery, photography, and jewelry making). These electives round out our students' educations and give them emotional and creative outlets for the stresses of life in general and of being an adolescent in particular. They learn to work in groups towards a common goal, to rely on each other and be reliable, to express emotions in appropriate ways, and to feel pride in their accomplishments.

Educators work hard to ease transitions during the school day, from writing the flow of each day on the board each morning to monitoring hallways between bells. Disruptions are detrimental to the learning process. Adding more disruptions is never helpful. Having groups of students going to and coming back from off-campus activities, while other students stay in class, destroys the careful planning of each teacher's day. Either the students leaving lose important parts of that day's lesson plan, or the students left behind spin their intellectual wheels aimless until the leavers return. Either scenario wastes precious time in the school day.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on Senate Bill 293 which undermines the education of public school students and the separation of Church and State. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.