

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Shelly Rea and I'm a retired public school educator, a Medina resident and lifetime Ohioan. I am strongly opposed to SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this additional testimony to the Ohio Senate Committee. As a former Language Arts teacher in the Medina City School district, as a mother of two grown daughters who were graduates of a public high school and public college with advanced degrees AND as an Ohioan who is paying attention, I implore this committee and our elected legislative representatives to establish firm guardrails against the "marketing" of religion during our local PUBLIC school day.

When we make the choice to enroll our children in a public school, we must be confident that our public school setting is maintaining the true mission of PUBLIC EDUCATION. Defined, that is "school maintained at public expense (taxes) for the education of our community's children."

I was raised by two public school educators, and I am a product of public school myself. My father was a lifetime public school educator and administrator, but was first a high school math teacher. I'm pleased to report, I can do the math.

Here are some numbers to consider as this issue is before you and before Ohioans:

In Ohio—the average cost per year, per student is \$14,500.

A 50 minute class costs Ohio taxpayers approximately \$13.00 per student.

In Ohio, current RTRI classes average between 45-60 minutes over approximately 31 weeks, away from the child's school building and in off site religious instruction.

\$13 multiplied by 31 weeks equals \$403 per student in the RTRI program models currently occurring in our state.

In Defiance City Schools, 841 students left school for the LifeWise Academy program. \$403 multiplied by 841 equals

\$338,923 SPENT but NOT UTILIZED by the Defiance school district as budgeted, since those students were not in the school building, but off site.

Let those numbers sink in. But please note, while these numbers are shocking, dollars and cents should not be our only concern at the heart of this.

As a former public educator, a faithful person, a proud parent of two successful adult children and as a grandmother — I can tell you that while the core academics matter, the electives and enrichment of the "specials" i.e art, music, and physical education

ALL form that whole student we can be proud of in PUBLIC EDUCATION and our democratic society.

These essential minutes that are in peril with this dangerous bill before you fulfill critical elements of a whole curriculum AND the healthy overall development of a member of our society. Sadly, we have students across our state already missing these vital opportunities for learning in schools that have approved these programs.

The dots, connecting the arts and music to Language Arts, Science, Mathematics and Social Studies MATTER. Approved enrichment classes offered during the public school day- IN the public school-matter to all of our students.

Adopting anything less than that in our public schools is a costly and unnecessary mistake and one Ohio elected officials should not make.

What I ask of you —is to keep public education PUBLIC in Ohio. Insist that policy you endorse as elected officials represents ALL Ohioans and that legislation you choose to elevate protects this

I ask you to consider my testimony, send a strong message protecting public education and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Rea  
Medina