

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am strongly opposed to SB 293 and its House counterpart HB 445.

My concern is that having been a licensed professional counselor for over 35 years and having a background in developmental psychology (and having raised two well functioning adults), I am concerned about the divisiveness of how a bill such as this will have in affecting the very malleable minds of young children. At this stage of their development kids begin to form prejudices that adults, not just parents, convey to them. LifeWise Academy does not vet their "instructors" with background checks as a means to determine if the "instructor" is even safe for the child to be with! The classes are what they call "character development" but they don't specify what this entails. Do parents even know what they're consenting to when they sign their child's release to attend? Additionally, while gone during the school day children miss important opportunities to develop skills in socialization, problem solving, resolving conflict and **disrupt** the learning of other children in their grade upon their leaving and returning to school.

I'd like to suggest a book for reference that will help you understand the importance of how children develop critical skills when having unstructured time with other children, which this bill will take away since they're sent off during recess and lunch. It's called The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt. I haven't even addressed the concern I have for how this bill potentially funnels money away from public education which is essential to our society however my concern is real.

Please consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill..I am not a lobbyist and represent only myself in this matter. I was unable to print and fill out your Education Committee Witness Slip.

Thank you,

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