

**As Introduced**

**135th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2023-2024**

**S. B. No. 293**

**Senator Reynolds**

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**A BILL**

To amend section 3313.6022 of the Revised Code 1  
regarding school district policies for released 2  
time courses in religious instruction. 3

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That section 3313.6022 of the Revised Code be 4  
amended to read as follows: 5

**Sec. 3313.6022.** (A) As used in this section, "released 6  
time" means a period of time during which a student is excused 7  
from school to attend a course in religious instruction 8  
conducted by a private entity off school district property. 9

(B) A school district board of education ~~may~~shall adopt a 10  
policy that authorizes a student to be excused from school to 11  
attend a released time course in religious instruction, provided 12  
that each of the following applies: 13

(1) The student's parent or guardian gives written 14  
consent. 15

(2) The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and 16  
makes them available to the school district the student attends. 17

(3) Transportation to and from the place of instruction, 18

including transportation for students with disabilities, is the complete responsibility of the sponsoring entity, parent, guardian, or student.

(4) The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student.

(5) No public funds are expended and no public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction.

(6) The student assumes responsibility for any missed schoolwork.

While in attendance in a released time course in religious instruction, a student shall not be considered absent from school. No student may be released from a core curriculum subject course to attend a religious instruction course.

(C) A policy adopted under division (B) of this section may authorize high school students to earn up to two units of high school credit for the completion of a released time course in religious instruction. In determining whether to award credit for completion of such a course, the board shall evaluate the course based on purely secular criteria that are substantially the same criteria used to evaluate similar nonpublic high school courses for purposes of determining whether to award credit for such courses to a student transferring from a nonpublic high school to a public high school. However, there shall be no criteria requiring that released time courses be completed only at a nonpublic school. The decision to award credit for a released time course of religious instruction shall be neutral to, and shall not involve any test for, religious content or denominational affiliation.

For purposes of this division, secular criteria may

include, but are not limited to, the following: 48

(1) The number of hours of classroom instruction time; 49

(2) A review of the course syllabus that reflects course 50  
requirements and materials used; 51

(3) The methods of assessment used in the course; 52

(4) The qualifications of the course instructor, which 53  
shall be similar to the qualifications of other teachers within 54  
the district. 55

Notwithstanding division (C) (8) of section 3313.603 of the 56  
Revised Code, high school credit awarded to a student for a 57  
released time course in religious instruction may substitute for 58  
the same amount of credit in subjects listed in that division. 59

(D) A school district, member of a school district board 60  
of education, or school district employee is not liable in 61  
damages in a civil action for injury allegedly arising during a 62  
student's transportation to or from a place of instruction when 63  
private transportation is used under a released time policy 64  
adopted under this section. This division does not eliminate, 65  
limit, or reduce any other immunity or defense that a school 66  
district, member of a school district board of education, or 67  
school district employee may be entitled to under Chapter 2744. 68  
or any other provision of the Revised Code or under the common 69  
law of this state. 70

**Section 2.** That existing section 3313.6022 of the Revised 71  
Code is hereby repealed. 72