As Passed by the Senate

135th General Assembly

Regular Session 2023-2024

Sub. S. B. No. 49

Senator Reynolds

Cosponsors: Senators Cirino, Roegner, Lang, Romanchuk, Schaffer, Huffman, S., Brenner, Antani, Antonio, Craig, Gavarone, Johnson, McColley, O'Brien, Reineke, Rulli

A BILL

То	amend sections 3314.03, 3326.11, and 3328.24 and	1
	to enact section 3320.04 of the Revised Code to	2
	enact the Religious Expression Days "R.E.D." Act	3
	to require each kindergarten through 12 public	4
	school to adopt a policy providing students with	5
	religious accommodations.	6

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

Section 1 . That sections 3314.03, 3326.11, and 3328.24 be	7
amended and section 3320.04 of the Revised Code be enacted to	8
read as follows:	9
Sec. 3314.03. A copy of every contract entered into under	10
this section shall be filed with the superintendent of public	11
instruction. The department of education shall make available on	12
its web site a copy of every approved, executed contract filed	13
with the superintendent under this section.	14
(A) Each contract entered into between a sponsor and the	15
governing authority of a community school shall specify the	16

following:	17
(1) That the school shall be established as either of the following:	18 19
(a) A nonprofit corporation established under Chapter	20
1702. of the Revised Code, if established prior to April 8,	21
2003;	22
(b) A public benefit corporation established under Chapter	23
1702. of the Revised Code, if established after April 8, 2003.	24
(2) The education program of the school, including the	25
school's mission, the characteristics of the students the school	26
is expected to attract, the ages and grades of students, and the	27
focus of the curriculum;	28
(3) The academic goals to be achieved and the method of	29
measurement that will be used to determine progress toward those	30
goals, which shall include the statewide achievement	31
assessments;	32
(4) Performance standards, including but not limited to	33
all applicable report card measures set forth in section 3302.03	34
or 3314.017 of the Revised Code, by which the success of the	35
school will be evaluated by the sponsor;	36
(5) The admission standards of section 3314.06 of the	37
Revised Code and, if applicable, section 3314.061 of the Revised	38
Code;	39
(6)(a) Dismissal procedures;	40
(b) A requirement that the governing authority adopt an	41
attendance policy that includes a procedure for automatically	42
withdrawing a student from the school if the student without a	43
legitimate excuse fails to participate in seventy-two	44

(11) That the school will comply with the following

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requirements:	73
(a) The school will provide learning opportunities to a	74
minimum of twenty-five students for a minimum of nine hundred	75
twenty hours per school year.	76
(b) The governing authority will purchase liability	77
insurance, or otherwise provide for the potential liability of	78
the school.	79
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(c) The school will be nonsectarian in its programs,	80
admission policies, employment practices, and all other	81
operations, and will not be operated by a sectarian school or	82
religious institution.	83
(d) The school will comply with sections 9.90, 9.91,	84
109.65, 121.22, 149.43, 2151.357, 2151.421, 2313.19, 3301.0710,	85
3301.0711, 3301.0712, 3301.0715, 3301.0729, 3301.948, 3302.037,	86
3313.472, 3313.50, 3313.539, 3313.5310, 3313.608, 3313.609,	87
3313.6012, 3313.6013, 3313.6014, 3313.6015, 3313.6020,	88
3313.6024, 3313.6025, 3313.6026, 3313.643, 3313.648, 3313.6411,	89
3313.66, 3313.661, 3313.662, 3313.666, 3313.667, 3313.668,	90
3313.669, 3313.6610, 3313.67, 3313.671, 3313.672, 3313.673,	91
3313.69, 3313.71, 3313.716, 3313.718, 3313.719, 3313.7112,	92
3313.721, 3313.80, 3313.814, 3313.816, 3313.817, 3313.818,	93
3313.86, 3313.89, 3313.96, 3319.073, 3319.077, 3319.078,	94
3319.238, 3319.318, 3319.321, 3319.39, 3319.391, 3319.393,	95
3319.41, 3319.46, 3320.01, 3320.02, 3320.03, <u>3320.04,</u> 3321.01,	96
3321.041, 3321.13, 3321.14, 3321.141, 3321.17, 3321.18, 3321.19,	97
3323.251, 3327.10, 4111.17, 4113.52, 5502.262, 5502.703, and	98
5705.391 and Chapters 117., 1347., 2744., 3365., 3742., 4112.,	99
4123., 4141., and 4167. of the Revised Code as if it were a	100
school district and will comply with section 3301.0714 of the	101
Revised Code in the manner specified in section 3314.17 of the	102

Revised Code.	103
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((e)	The	school	shall	comply	with	Chapter	102.	and	section	104
2921.42	of	f the	e Revise	ed Cod	е.						105

(f) The school will comply with sections 3313.61,	106
3313.611, 3313.614, 3313.617, 3313.618, and 3313.6114 of the	107
Revised Code, except that for students who enter ninth grade for	108
the first time before July 1, 2010, the requirement in sections	109
3313.61 and 3313.611 of the Revised Code that a person must	110
successfully complete the curriculum in any high school prior to	111
receiving a high school diploma may be met by completing the	112
curriculum adopted by the governing authority of the community	113
school rather than the curriculum specified in Title XXXIII of	114
the Revised Code or any rules of the state board of education.	115
Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time	116
on or after July 1, 2010, the requirement in sections 3313.61	117
and 3313.611 of the Revised Code that a person must successfully	118
complete the curriculum of a high school prior to receiving a	119
high school diploma shall be met by completing the requirements	120
prescribed in section 3313.6027 and division (C) of section	121
3313.603 of the Revised Code, unless the person qualifies under	122
division (D) or (F) of that section. Each school shall comply	123
with the plan for awarding high school credit based on	124
demonstration of subject area competency, and beginning with the	125
2017-2018 school year, with the updated plan that permits	126
students enrolled in seventh and eighth grade to meet curriculum	127
requirements based on subject area competency adopted by the	128
state board of education under divisions (J)(1) and (2) of	129
section 3313.603 of the Revised Code. Beginning with the 2018-	130
2019 school year, the school shall comply with the framework for	131
granting units of high school credit to students who demonstrate	132
subject area competency through work-based learning experiences,	133

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internships, or cooperative education developed by the	134
department under division (J)(3) of section 3313.603 of the	135
Revised Code.	136
(g) The school governing authority will submit within four	137
months after the end of each school year a report of its	138
activities and progress in meeting the goals and standards of	139
divisions (A)(3) and (4) of this section and its financial	140
status to the sponsor and the parents of all students enrolled	141
in the school.	142
(h) The school, unless it is an internet- or computer-	143
based community school, will comply with section 3313.801 of the	144
Revised Code as if it were a school district.	145
(i) If the school is the recipient of moneys from a grant	146
awarded under the federal race to the top program, Division (A),	147
Title XIV, Sections 14005 and 14006 of the "American Recovery	148
and Reinvestment Act of 2009," Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115,	149
the school will pay teachers based upon performance in	150
accordance with section 3317.141 and will comply with section	151
3319.111 of the Revised Code as if it were a school district.	152
(j) If the school operates a preschool program that is	153
licensed by the department of education under sections 3301.52	154
to 3301.59 of the Revised Code, the school shall comply with	155
sections 3301.50 to 3301.59 of the Revised Code and the minimum	156
standards for preschool programs prescribed in rules adopted by	157

- (k) The school will comply with sections 3313.6021 and 159
 3313.6023 of the Revised Code as if it were a school district 160
 unless it is either of the following: 161
 - (i) An internet- or computer-based community school;

the state board under section 3301.53 of the Revised Code.

(ii) A community school in which a majority of the	163
enrolled students are children with disabilities as described in	164
division (A)(4)(b) of section 3314.35 of the Revised Code.	165
(1) The school will comply with section 3321.191 of the	166
Revised Code, unless it is an internet- or computer-based	167
community school that is subject to section 3314.261 of the	168
Revised Code.	169
(12) Arrangements for providing health and other benefits	170
to employees;	171
(13) The length of the contract, which shall begin at the	172
beginning of an academic year. No contract shall exceed five	173
years unless such contract has been renewed pursuant to division	174
(E) of this section.	175
(14) The governing authority of the school, which shall be	176
responsible for carrying out the provisions of the contract;	177
(15) A financial plan detailing an estimated school budget	178
for each year of the period of the contract and specifying the	179
total estimated per pupil expenditure amount for each such year.	180
(16) Requirements and procedures regarding the disposition	181
of employees of the school in the event the contract is	182
terminated or not renewed pursuant to section 3314.07 of the	183
Revised Code;	184
(17) Whether the school is to be created by converting all	185
or part of an existing public school or educational service	186
center building or is to be a new start-up school, and if it is	187
a converted public school or service center building,	188
specification of any duties or responsibilities of an employer	189
that the board of education or service center governing board	190
that operated the school or building before conversion is	191

delegating to the governing authority of the community school	192
with respect to all or any specified group of employees provided	193
the delegation is not prohibited by a collective bargaining	194
agreement applicable to such employees;	195
(18) Provisions establishing procedures for resolving	196
disputes or differences of opinion between the sponsor and the	197
governing authority of the community school;	198
(19) A provision requiring the governing authority to	199
adopt a policy regarding the admission of students who reside	200
outside the district in which the school is located. That policy	201
shall comply with the admissions procedures specified in	202
sections 3314.06 and 3314.061 of the Revised Code and, at the	203
sole discretion of the authority, shall do one of the following:	204
(a) Prohibit the enrollment of students who reside outside	205
the district in which the school is located;	206
(b) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in	207
districts adjacent to the district in which the school is	208
located;	209
(c) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in any	210
other district in the state.	211
(20) A provision recognizing the authority of the	212
department of education to take over the sponsorship of the	213
school in accordance with the provisions of division (C) of	214
section 3314.015 of the Revised Code;	215
(21) A provision recognizing the sponsor's authority to	216
assume the operation of a school under the conditions specified	217
in division (B) of section 3314.073 of the Revised Code;	218
(22) A provision recognizing both of the following:	210

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(a) The authority of public health and safety officials to 220 inspect the facilities of the school and to order the facilities 221 closed if those officials find that the facilities are not in 222 compliance with health and safety laws and regulations; 223 (b) The authority of the department of education as the 224 community school oversight body to suspend the operation of the 225 school under section 3314.072 of the Revised Code if the 226 department has evidence of conditions or violations of law at 227 the school that pose an imminent danger to the health and safety 228 229 of the school's students and employees and the sponsor refuses 230 to take such action. (23) A description of the learning opportunities that will 231 be offered to students including both classroom-based and non-232 classroom-based learning opportunities that is in compliance 233 with criteria for student participation established by the 234 department under division (H)(2) of section 3314.08 of the 235 Revised Code; 236 (24) The school will comply with sections 3302.04 and 237 3302.041 of the Revised Code, except that any action required to 238 be taken by a school district pursuant to those sections shall 239 be taken by the sponsor of the school. However, the sponsor 240 shall not be required to take any action described in division 241 (F) of section 3302.04 of the Revised Code. 242 (25) Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, the school 243 will open for operation not later than the thirtieth day of 244 September each school year, unless the mission of the school as 245 specified under division (A)(2) of this section is solely to 246 serve dropouts. In its initial year of operation, if the school 247 fails to open by the thirtieth day of September, or within one 248

year after the adoption of the contract pursuant to division (D)

of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code if the mission of the	250
school is solely to serve dropouts, the contract shall be void.	251
(26) Whether the school's governing authority is planning	252
to seek designation for the school as a STEM school equivalent	253
under section 3326.032 of the Revised Code;	254
(27) That the school's attendance and participation	255
policies will be available for public inspection;	256
(28) That the school's attendance and participation	257
records shall be made available to the department of education,	258
auditor of state, and school's sponsor to the extent permitted	259
under and in accordance with the "Family Educational Rights and	260
Privacy Act of 1974," 88 Stat. 571, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, as amended,	261
and any regulations promulgated under that act, and section	262
3319.321 of the Revised Code;	263
(29) If a school operates using the blended learning	264
model, as defined in section 3301.079 of the Revised Code, all	265
of the following information:	266
(a) An indication of what blended learning model or models	267
will be used;	268
(b) A description of how student instructional needs will	269
be determined and documented;	270
(c) The method to be used for determining competency,	271
granting credit, and promoting students to a higher grade level;	272
(d) The school's attendance requirements, including how	273
the school will document participation in learning	274
opportunities;	275
(e) A statement describing how student progress will be	276
monitored;	277

(f) A statement describing how private student data will	278
be protected;	279
(g) A description of the professional development	280
activities that will be offered to teachers.	281
(30) A provision requiring that all moneys the school's	282
operator loans to the school, including facilities loans or cash	283
flow assistance, must be accounted for, documented, and bear	284
interest at a fair market rate;	285
(31) A provision requiring that, if the governing	286
authority contracts with an attorney, accountant, or entity	287
specializing in audits, the attorney, accountant, or entity	288
shall be independent from the operator with which the school has	289
contracted.	290
(32) A provision requiring the governing authority to	291
adopt an enrollment and attendance policy that requires a	292
student's parent to notify the community school in which the	293
student is enrolled when there is a change in the location of	294
the parent's or student's primary residence.	295
(33) A provision requiring the governing authority to	296
adopt a student residence and address verification policy for	297
students enrolling in or attending the school.	298
(B) The community school shall also submit to the sponsor	299
a comprehensive plan for the school. The plan shall specify the	300
following:	301
(1) The process by which the governing authority of the	302
school will be selected in the future;	303
(2) The management and administration of the school;	304
(3) If the community school is a currently existing public	305

contract;

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arrangements for current public school students who choose not	307
to attend the converted school and for teachers who choose not	308
to teach in the school or building after conversion;	309
(4) The instructional program and educational philosophy	310
of the school;	311
(5) Internal financial controls.	312
When submitting the plan under this division, the school	313
shall also submit copies of all policies and procedures	314
regarding internal financial controls adopted by the governing	315
authority of the school.	316
(C) A contract entered into under section 3314.02 of the	317
Revised Code between a sponsor and the governing authority of a	318
community school may provide for the community school governing	319
authority to make payments to the sponsor, which is hereby	320
authorized to receive such payments as set forth in the contract	321
between the governing authority and the sponsor. The total	322
amount of such payments for monitoring, oversight, and technical	323
assistance of the school shall not exceed three per cent of the	324
total amount of payments for operating expenses that the school	325
receives from the state.	326
(D) The contract shall specify the duties of the sponsor	327
which shall be in accordance with the written agreement entered	328
into with the department of education under division (B) of	329
section 3314.015 of the Revised Code and shall include the	330
following:	331
(1) Monitor the community school's compliance with all	332
laws applicable to the school and with the terms of the	333

(2) Monitor and evaluate the academic and fiscal	335
performance and the organization and operation of the community	336
school on at least an annual basis;	337
(3) Report on an annual basis the results of the	338
evaluation conducted under division (D)(2) of this section to	339
the department of education and to the parents of students	340
enrolled in the community school;	341
(4) Provide technical assistance to the community school	342
in complying with laws applicable to the school and terms of the	343
contract;	344
(5) Take steps to intervene in the school's operation to	345
correct problems in the school's overall performance, declare	346
the school to be on probationary status pursuant to section	347
3314.073 of the Revised Code, suspend the operation of the	348
school pursuant to section 3314.072 of the Revised Code, or	349
terminate the contract of the school pursuant to section 3314.07	350
of the Revised Code as determined necessary by the sponsor;	351
(6) Have in place a plan of action to be undertaken in the	352
event the community school experiences financial difficulties or	353
closes prior to the end of a school year.	354
(E) Upon the expiration of a contract entered into under	355
this section, the sponsor of a community school may, with the	356
approval of the governing authority of the school, renew that	357
contract for a period of time determined by the sponsor, but not	358
ending earlier than the end of any school year, if the sponsor	359
finds that the school's compliance with applicable laws and	360
terms of the contract and the school's progress in meeting the	361
academic goals prescribed in the contract have been	362
satisfactory. Any contract that is renewed under this division	363

remains subject to the provisions of sections 3314.07, 3314.072,	364
and 3314.073 of the Revised Code.	365
(F) If a community school fails to open for operation	366
within one year after the contract entered into under this	367
section is adopted pursuant to division (D) of section 3314.02	368
of the Revised Code or permanently closes prior to the	369
expiration of the contract, the contract shall be void and the	370
school shall not enter into a contract with any other sponsor. A	371
school shall not be considered permanently closed because the	372
operations of the school have been suspended pursuant to section	373
3314.072 of the Revised Code.	374
Sec. 3320.04. Each school district board of education	375
shall adopt a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely	376
held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with	377
regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and	378
absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief	379
system. The policy shall satisfy all of the following	380
<pre>conditions:</pre>	381
(A) The policy shall permit a student in any of grades	382
kindergarten through twelve to be absent for up to three	383
religious expression days each school year to take holidays for	384
reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or	385
participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices	386
of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or	387
spiritual organization. The district shall not impose an	388
academic penalty as a result of a student being absent as	389
permitted in the policy. The policy shall also permit students	390
to participate in interscholastic athletics or other	391
extracurricular activities on days in which the student was	392
otherwise absent for a religious expression day.	393

(B) (1) The policy shall require that students be provided	394
with alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and	395
other academic requirements missed due to an absence described	396
in division (A) of this section if not later than fourteen	397
school days after the first day of school, or fourteen school	398
days after the date of enrollment for a student who transfers to	399
or enrolls in the district after the first day of school, the	400
parent or guardian of a student provides the school principal	401
with written notice of up to three specific dates for which	402
alternative accommodations are requested, if an absence approved	403
under division (B)(2) of this section conflicts with an	404
examination or other academic requirement on that date.	405
(2) The school principal shall approve not more than three	406
written requests per school year from a student's parent or	407
guardian for an excused absence under division (A) of this	408
section. The school principal shall approve such requests	409
without inquiry into the sincerity of a student's religious or	410
spiritual belief system. However, the school principal may	411
verify a request received under division (A) of this section by	412
contacting the parent or guardian whose signature appears on the	413
request. If a parent or guardian disputes having signed such a	414
request, the school principal may deny the request. Upon	415
approval of a request that satisfies division (B)(1) of this	416
section, a school principal shall require the appropriate	417
classroom teacher or teachers to schedule a time and date for an	418
alternative examination or other academic requirement if the	419
approved student absence creates a conflict, which may be before	420
or after the time and date the examination or other academic	421
requirement was originally scheduled.	422
(C) The policy shall require the district board to post	423
both of the following in a prominent location on the district's	424

<pre>web site:</pre>	425
(1) A copy of the policy adopted under this section, which	426
shall include the contact information of an individual who can	427
<pre>provide further information about the policy;</pre>	428
(2) A nonexhaustive list of major religious holidays,	429
festivals, and religious observations, which may include, Eid,	430
Good Friday, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover, for which	431
an excused absence under this section shall not be unreasonably	432
withheld or denied.	433
The state superintendent shall provide each district with	434
a nonexhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals	435
for the next two school years, including Eid, Good Friday, Rosh	436
Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover, at the beginning of each	437
school year. Each district may adopt the state superintendent's	438
list in its entirety or choose which holidays to include on its	439
<u>list.</u>	440
Each time a district's policy is posted, printed, or	441
published, including as described in divisions (C) and (D) of	442
this section, the district shall include a statement that the	443
list is nonexhaustive, and the list may not be used to deny	444
accommodation to a student for a holiday or festival of the	445
student's faith or religious or spiritual belief system that	446
does not appear on the list.	447
Nothing in this section, and no inclusion or exclusion of	448
a religious holiday or festival on the list posted by a	449
district, shall preclude a student from full and reasonable	450
accommodations for any sincerely held religious beliefs and	451
practices with regard to all examinations or other academic	452
requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or	153

spiritual belief system provided under this section.	454
(D) The policy shall require school districts annually to	455
convey to parents and guardians the policy adopted under this	456
section, including a description of the general procedure for	457
requesting accommodations. The manner in which the school	458
district conveys the information shall be determined at the	459
discretion of the district.	460
(E) The policy shall include a procedure under which a	461
student, parent, or guardian may notify the district of any	462
grievance with regard to the implementation of the policy	463
required under this section.	464
(F) Any days excused under this section shall not be	465
considered in determining absence hours for the purposes of	466
parental notification under division (C)(1) of section 3321.191	467
of the Revised Code.	468
Sec. 3326.11. Each science, technology, engineering, and	469
mathematics school established under this chapter and its	470
governing body shall comply with sections 9.90, 9.91, 109.65,	471
121.22, 149.43, 2151.357, 2151.421, 2313.19, 2921.42, 2921.43,	472
3301.0714, 3301.0715, 3301.0729, 3301.948, 3302.037, 3313.14,	473
3313.15, 3313.16, 3313.18, 3313.201, 3313.26, 3313.472, 3313.48,	474
3313.481, 3313.482, 3313.50, 3313.539, 3313.5310, 3313.608,	475
3313.6012, 3313.6013, 3313.6014, 3313.6015, 3313.6020,	476
3313.6021, 3313.6024, 3313.6025, 3313.6026, 3313.61, 3313.611,	477
3313.614, 3313.615, 3313.617, 3313.618, 3313.6114, 3313.643,	478
3313.648, 3313.6411, 3313.66, 3313.661, 3313.662, 3313.666,	479
3313.667, 3313.668, 3313.669, 3313.6610, 3313.67, 3313.671,	480
3313.672, 3313.673, 3313.69, 3313.71, 3313.716, 3313.718,	481
3313.719, 3313.7112, 3313.721, 3313.80, 3313.801, 3313.814,	482
3313.816, 3313.817, 3313.818, 3313.86, 3313.89, 3313.96,	483

3319.073, 3319.077, 3319.078, 3319.21, 3319.238, 3319.318,	484
3319.32, 3319.321, 3319.35, 3319.39, 3319.391, 3319.393,	485
3319.41, 3319.45, 3319.46, 3320.01, 3320.02, 3320.03, <u>3320.04,</u>	486
3321.01, 3321.041, 3321.05, 3321.13, 3321.14, 3321.141, 3321.17,	487
3321.18, 3321.19, 3321.191, 3323.251, 3327.10, 4111.17, 4113.52,	488
5502.262, 5502.703, and 5705.391 and Chapters 102., 117., 1347.,	489
2744., 3307., 3309., 3365., 3742., 4112., 4123., 4141., and	490
4167. of the Revised Code as if it were a school district.	491
Sec. 3328.24. A college-preparatory boarding school	492
established under this chapter and its board of trustees shall	493
comply with sections 102.02, 3301.0710, 3301.0711, 3301.0712,	494
3301.0714, 3301.0729, 3301.948, 3302.037, 3313.6013, 3313.6021,	495
3313.6024, 3313.6025, 3313.6026, 3313.617, 3313.618, 3313.6114,	496
3313.6411, 3313.668, 3313.669, 3313.6610, 3313.7112, 3313.721,	497
3313.89, 3319.073, 3319.077, 3319.078, 3319.318, 3319.39,	498
3319.391, 3319.393, 3319.46, 3320.01, 3320.02, 3320.03, <u>3320.04</u> ,	499
3323.251, and 5502.262, and Chapter 3365. of the Revised Code as	500
if the school were a school district and the school's board of	501
trustees were a district board of education.	502
Section 2. That existing sections 3314.03, 3326.11, and	503
3328.24 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.	504
Section 3. This act shall be known as the Religious	505
Expression Days or "R.E.D." Act.	506
Section 4. Section 3328.24 of the Revised Code is	507
presented in this act as a composite of the section as amended	508
by both H.B. 82 and H.B. 110 of the 134th General Assembly. The	509
General Assembly, applying the principle stated in division (B)	510
of section 1.52 of the Revised Code that amendments are to be	511
harmonized if reasonably capable of simultaneous operation,	512
finds that the composite is the resulting version of the section	513

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in effect prior to the effective date of the section as	514
presented in this act.	515