

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 445. My name is Emily Marquis and I am from Delaware County. I am a teacher in Olentangy Local Schools. I am also a Christian.

I have noticed a trend that parents want character education to be taught to their children in school. The parents I have talked to are concerned about the way our world is headed and they want some guidance on how to navigate the culture. They want structure and stability. Frankly, as an educator and a parent, so do I. Lifewise Olentangy offers this and I would love to see other Ohio children get the same opportunity. I believe that parents should have the authority to choose released time Religious instruction for their children, not school officials. For schools to be able to deny children and their parents of this choice is overstepping their bounds. Since the law allows released time Religious education for children, I ask that the language be changed from "may" to "shall", putting the power into the hands of parents to choose what is right for their own children.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for House Bill 445.

Sincerely,

Emily Marquis

Teacher at Olentangy Liberty Middle School