

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and House Primary and Secondary Education Committee members thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 445. We are Robert & Tiffany Allen, from Greene County, and we fully support House Bill 445 authorizing students to attend a released time course in religious instruction.

According to a study conducted this year, over 75 percent of parents favor a released time course in religious instruction. Parents should have the right to decide how their child's time is spent throughout the day. Parents also know how important the many positive impacts this released time course in religious instruction will have on their child and the community as a whole. Children are taught Biblical principles and morals that are vital for establishing a solid foundation to aid their future educational development. Thomas P. Miller & Associates conducted an independent study and found students who participated in these types of programs showed improved attendance and behavior. Additional research on children receiving religious instruction found they were more resilient, with improved mental health and academics. In 2021, Vivek Murthy, US Surgeon General stated mental health is plaguing young people across the nation. Released time religious instruction could be the lifeline our children need for their mental health.

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

Sincerely,

Robert & Tiffany Allen