

February 7, 2023  
Senate Bill 128 proponent written  
Chairman Tyson and Committee,

Hello. My name is Joni Walter and I am writing this letter as a testimony in support of SB128. During our daughter's second grade year at a public school, it became increasingly apparent that there were things being taught that went against our beliefs. In one particular incident involving the music that was being taught to our daughter and her classmates in music class for an upcoming spring program, our daughter expressed to us one day her concern over the lyrics in a specific song and her discomfort in singing it. I subsequently reached out to the school requesting the lyrics to the music. After receiving the music to all of the songs and reviewing them, we made the decision that our daughter would not be participating in the program or practices for this particular music program because the lyrics went against our beliefs and we did not want our daughter to be further exposed to these songs. We also requested that she be able to stay in her classroom during the music period so that she would not have to hear the song(s). Upon respectfully communicating this with our daughter's second grade teacher, music teacher and principal of the school, the response from the principle, in part, was as follows;

"We understand your request and will honor your request to have Finnley stay in Mrs. Hieberts classroom during the music period. I will need to discuss with Mrs. Brubaker how we will determine the grade for this quarter. The music program is a vital part of the music curriculum and we may just have to determine based on the reduced time she was in the music classroom."

It was after this second grade year of school that we looked into and made the decision to send our daughter to Berean Academy, where we knew that the curriculum that she would be taught would line up with our beliefs. Our daughter has attended Berean Academy since third grade, is now in fifth grade and has done well at this private, Christian school and we believe she is thriving in her academics, music, band, art and amongst her peers in ways that she was not and would not have been able to at the public school she had attended.

We live in a community where we pay taxes for the local public school that our daughter does not attend. Both my husband and I, her parent's, have made sacrifices that allow our daughter to attend Berean Academy. I, Joni, have sacrificed being a stay at home mom and am working at the kitchen at Berean Academy. I have also taken on a job part time cleaning an office to help with expenses. There are other ways that we have cut expenses as well.

We are convinced that this school is where our daughter is supposed to be and see her growing in ways that we do not and believe she could, if she were not in a Christian school. I ask that you please consider this testimony when making a decision on SB128 and support this bill.

Sincerely,  
Joni Walter