Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 425 of the 131st G.A. **Date**: February 17, 2016

Status: As Reported by House Community and Family Advancement **Sponsor**: Rep. Hayes

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Establishes the "Ohio Student Religious Liberties Act of 2016" which defines religious expression, permits students to engage in religious activity at school, and prohibits schools from disallowing religious expression in class assignments

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill authorizes students enrolled in public schools to engage in religious expression before, during, and after school hours to the same extent that a student may engage in secular activities or expression before, during, and after school hours. Accordingly, it also removes a provision that permits school districts to limit the exercise or expression of religion to lunch periods or other noninstructional time periods. It requires public schools to give students who wish to meet for the purpose of religious expression the same access to school facilities given to secular student groups, without regard to the content of the expression. The bill also prohibits schools from disallowing religious expression in class assignments. As defined in the bill, "religious expression" includes prayer, religious gatherings, distribution of written literature, and any other activity of a religious nature. The bill has no direct fiscal effect on the state or school districts.

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