

### ***“Religious expression” bill introduced***

State Rep. Sarah LaTourette (R-Chagrin Falls) and Rep. Tim Ginter (R-Salem) have reintroduced legislation passed by the House in the previous legislative session, but stalled in the Senate, aimed at providing clarity on how schools and districts should address faith-based organizations and events.

“We’re clarifying for school districts that faith-based organizations are to be treated the same as secular organizations,” LaTourette said. “They are to be treated equally, and that includes having the same access to school facilities.”

Under current law, districts may limit religious expression to lunch or other non-instructional time. This would change under H.B. 428, which would also prohibit restrictions on student expression of religious beliefs in homework, artwork or other class assignments.

“The student may not be penalized or rewarded for the religious beliefs they express, but the same academic standards, based on substance and relevance, still apply,” LaTourette said.

The legislation would also allow students to express religious beliefs through t-shirts; however, boards could deem them inappropriate if they are vulgar or offensive.