

Dear Chairman Dembrow and members of the committee, I strongly oppose SB 223. This bill is a significant threat to Religious Freedom and Parental Choice. It also undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the State. To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing in the Oregon State Constitution that allows the State to interfere in such matters that SB 223 seeks to do. Moreover, I present my concerns in bullet-point form:

- Many children are best served by private Christian schools. I was one of those children and plan to enroll my child in faith-based, private education. This is my choice as a parent.
- SB 223 would essentially force private schools to register with the state or cut off student access to choir, sports, and other interscholastic programs. Our schools already prioritize student safety, but this bill goes too far. It prevents in essence free association within schools, the State has no business in such matters. A parent and a child's choice to engage in such activities should not have to be dependent upon meeting State and bureaucratic requirements.
- It's unfair to punish our children by excluding them from enriching extracurricular activities that are currently offered to both public and private school students. The State has no business in dictating who gets to be involved in these activities.
- My school (Alma Mater) is currently a member of OSAA, and I participated in many extracurricular activities. Why would you take this opportunity away from current students, especially after the isolation created due to the COVID-19 pandemic? If anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven, once again, the government should not be involved in telling people how to live their lives. What we need as state (and as a country) is more freedom and less government intervention and bureaucracy.
- SB 223 adds expenses to private schools and early childhood programs with little (if any) benefit to the schools or students served by them. The Legislature passed a law in 2019 to protect private school students, and SB 223 is unnecessary in light of that legislation.
- It shouldn't matter what type of school children attend. I will send my children to a private school, and I also pay Oregon taxes that pay for Oregon's public education system. My children should have the same ability to participate in extracurricular activities as their public-school peers. If the government interferes and restricts private school children from participating in certain activities, then the government will be discriminating against both private school parents and children.
- Please don't use our students as leverage in political fights. I ask you to stand with parents, like me, and vote 'NO' on SB 223. It's unnecessary and will only harm our children.