

I am writing to oppose SB 223. This bill infringes on religious freedom rights, seeking to give ODE the same authority over private schools that it has over public schools. It threatens to take away parental rights to pursue a private education for their children that is truly in line with their religious values. As both a parent of children in a private school and a teacher at a private school, I deeply value the opportunity to be a part of a school in which we can enjoy religious freedom and the expression of our values and beliefs without fear of persecution from those who do not hold the same values and beliefs. SB 223 would take away that opportunity by giving the ODE an open door to force private schools to submit to all requirements imposed on public schools, ultimately taking away the religious freedom we are able to experience at a private school. One of our country's longest standing values is the right to freedom of religion and freedom from persecution for that religion. Please do not allow SB 223 to threaten that long held value. Our freedoms in America have come at a great price; let us not dishonor the sacrifices made for those freedoms.