

Thank you Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members for your service to our community. For the record my name is Kim Walters and I'm the president of Oregonians for Liberty in Education. I'll be speaking on behalf of my organization and the hundreds of Oregon families we represent.

We strongly oppose SB 223.

As a licensed teacher who has worked in both Oregon private and public schools I know that families need educational options for their children. What works for one family may be a disaster for another. I believe all families want their children to thrive and putting unnecessary restrictions and regulations onto the private education sector will limit education options for families.

If private schools need ODE approval for all plans and procedures, they would become de facto public schools. This is a grave threat to religious freedom, parental rights and choice which would undermine the broad educational goals of private education!

Families of over 50,000 Oregon school children choose private schools for a reason. Many parents have religious or conscientious objections to public schooling for their children.

This bill is a threat to parents' First Amendment right to religious freedom and Fourteenth Amendment right to liberty, which includes the right to choose private education for their children.

This bill effectively puts a state committee in charge of all Oregon private schools. Private schools would now need to report to ODE for curriculum, schedule, facilities, policies, and staffing.

No to mention the impact if a school does not submit to the private school registry, it would exclude students from OSAA interscholastic activities which reduces the interaction between communities and creates walls, rather than bridges.

The financial impact from this bill shows wasteful spending and is unnecessary. Neither OSAA nor any private schools have requested this change. This would create another layer of government bureaucracy and more regulations on private schools which will take money, time, and attention away from actually educating kids. Oregon's state budget is already strained due to the impact of COVID-19. The priority for school spending should be getting kids back in the classroom and learning!

I urge you to vote NO on SB 223. Thank you for your time.

