

To whom it may concern,

I'll be brief in this testimony, knowing that many others have laid out the reasons why this is such an egregious bill in terms of freedom. I wish only to give you a personal perspective. I am a mom with two children who attend two different private Christian schools. They are both gifted runners, and one of their greatest joys is running competitively. This unusual year has been challenging for them, as the opportunities to run competitively were curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions. It has been greatly refreshing for them to participate in team running again in this late, abbreviated cross-country season that the state has allowed. SB223 threatens to take away their opportunities for competitive running again forever or to erase the existence of private schools. The bill gives private Christian schools two options. Either they register with ODE, and interscholastic sports participation remains, or they don't register and they lose that freedom to participate with OSAA. If a private Christian school does register with ODE, then they will lose complete authority over important school concerns. ODE would then have what would be an ever-growing control over school matters, and that school would be a private school in name only from that point on. Why is it important to the state for private Christian schools to join ODE? I can make assumptions, but there is no stated purpose for this in the bill. Who stands to gain from this change? Is it the state? And why? It is not the private Christian schools that it serves. This appears to be a gentle way to force private Christian schools to register with the ODE, when that is not what they would desire to do otherwise. If this bill passes, the distinction between private and public schools will become difficult to discern, and more so over time. Then the day will come when there will be nothing but public schools. There will be no school choice at all. That will be fertile ground for indoctrinating a population, but not an ideal circumstance for those who value freedom. If this bill passes, I will for the first time know what it is to be deprived of freedom by this great country of mine. Thank you for reading my testimony. I hope you will do the right thing for those you represent.