

March 13, 2021

RE: Senate Bill 223

Dear Senator Committee on Education,

Our family strongly opposes SB223 and we ask that you vote "NO". SB223 would essentially force private schools to register with the state or cut off student access to choir, sports, and other interscholastic programs. Our school already prioritize student safety and this bill goes too far.

Our son, Keaten, attends East Linn Christian Academy (ELCA) in Lebanon, Oregon as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student. He loves going to school (which is not normal for Keaten), he comes home excited to tell us about his day, and he is doing well academically. Keaten also loves sports; he plays football, basketball, baseball, and this year he is trying tennis. Sports are a way for Keaten to build confidence and help him stay active and fit. As Keaten moves into middle and high school, he should be able to play sports just like his public-school peers. We strongly opposed SB223.

We have three children and all of them have attended public schools up until Keaten started at ELCA this Fall. The public school system works for many families but for our son Keaten it is not the best option. In public school, Keaten was in large classes, was shy and did not feel confident asking for help. We had no clue that he was struggling until distance learning happened and he did not seem to understand any of his work. We got him in for a learning assessment in October 2020 and he was diagnosed as a slow learner with learning disabilities (math) and mild ADHD. His assessment scores were so low that I have no idea how it was not noticed in school. Keaten was quiet and I believe due to large class sizes with disruptive kids, the quiet, shy kid just got overlooked.

ELCA can support Keaten with smaller class sizes and Christian staff who are there to help him thrive and grow as a person. Keaten is noticed and he asks questions because he feels more comfortable at ELCA. Another very important factor for our family is that Keaten gets an excellent education while learning about this confusing world from a Christian view. He is being taught at school the way we teach at home. We love that fact that when he is frustrated or worried that he can ask for prayer and feel supported by his teachers and peers. He is getting an "A" in Bible and is so proud. ELCA offers us what public schools are not allowed to offer because of state oversight which is why we choose ELCA.

If SB223 passes, it takes options away from our son which will only harm him and his future. Please vote "NO" on SB223.

Sincerely,

Wendy Younger  
Albany, Oregon