

Dear Chairman Dembrow,

Of all the bills that have been put before the Oregon State Legislatures over the past year that I am disappointed in, I vehemently oppose SB 223. This bill is a significant threat to religious freedom and parental choice and I can not believe this is something you are wasting tax payer dollars to propose. This bill undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the state; a state with a terrible record for public school education already. Why not spend your time cleaning up our public schools instead of trying to control the private schools who are doing a great job in educating our children?

My child has attended private school since kindergarten and his educational needs are best served by our private Christian schools. I chose to enroll my child in faith-based, private education not only because I wanted him to study the bible and it's teachings, but I have followed the failings of the public school systems in Oregon. Why in the world do you need more control? By forcing private schools to register with ODE, you are taking away the entire concept of a private school and forcing them to follow an education department.

And WOW - I thought ODE, if nothing else, looked out for the best interest of our children. I guess not as SB 223 would essentially force private schools to register with the state or the students will be denied access to interscholastic programs. How unbelievably horrific and harsh! It is enough that these kids have had to endure the back and forth from ODE, OHA, the Governor and OSAA this entire year, but to now threaten them once again is downright child abuse and quite frankly sounds unconstitutional!

As a taxpaying Oregonian, I am allowed to determine what is best for my son, not you. If I feel a private education is best, that is my choice without interference from ODE who wants nothing more than to ruin the private schools in our state. We elect you into office to represent our needs, wants and interests - this is overstepping and way out of bounds.

I implore you to vote against SB 223 and leave our private schools alone.

Thank you,
Courtenay