

Dr. Chairman Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose SB 223. This bill is a significant threat to religious freedom and parental choice. I believe my child's educational needs are best met by a private Christian school and therefore I have chosen to enroll him at Santiam Christian School at my own expense. Forcing private schools to register with the state in order to participate in interscholastic activities is essentially state participation in cancel culture.

This would completely undermine the reasons that I chose at my own expense to have my child receive a private education. It would also exclude him from participating with and competing against other children with different perspectives. These are not the values that I have taught my son. I want him to be inclusive and able to understand others thoughts even if he disagrees with them. I take offense to the fact that the government would now be setting up exclusionary rules when we as a society are struggling with how to be inclusive.

As a business owner I pay more than my fair share of taxes that support the public education system, which my family chooses not to use, as well as interscholastic activities such as the OSAA which my family does benefit from directly. My son, who is now a sophomore, has participated in athletics and other interscholastic programs throughout his education. If these programs were to be taken away from him now, especially since they are just restarting following the pandemic he would be devastated.

Please do not allow my son to be used as a pawn for political gain.

Sincerely,

Telly Wirth, Tangent (Linn County)