

March 17, 2021

Chair Michael Dembrow  
Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Via email.

Senator Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 223, which would create a regulatory structure for private K-12 schools in Oregon. I provide this testimony as a private citizen and as a parent. My husband and I have made the choice to enroll our daughter in a private school as she begins her educational career. As any parent knows, every choice you make takes into account first and foremost what is best for your child, then your family. We take these choices we make on her behalf seriously. She is our greatest and best investment.

SB 223 imposes a regulatory structure that attempts to take the independence away from private schools. While the bill indicates it is a permissive choice for a private school to register under the Oregon Department of Education, that choice is not without consequence. Under this bill, only registered private schools would be permitted to engage in interscholastic activities with public schools and therefore public school students.

Penalizing independent, private schools by stopping interaction with the public school system is unfair and unnecessary. Many schools, private and public, benefit from robust competition, engagement and learning through clubs, music and other activities and of course athletics. OSAA sanctioned events, FFA, FBLA, DECA, Battle of the Books, Olympics of the Mind and many other events are made more beneficial by engagement by many students. To demand a set of standards

Private schools are required to adhere to standards for the safety and wellbeing of children. And parents who are making the choice to send their children to a private school, are doing their research, gathering information, discussing safety measures on the various options and evaluating what is the best fit for their child and their family. We are not going into this choice of schools with our eyes closed.

Trusting parents with the decisions for their children in education should be a fundamental principle that we approach these conversations from – and acknowledging that while we are supporting public schools through our taxes, we are also supporting other forms of education concurrently. Imposing a regulatory structure that takes away from the autonomy of the private school's focus and direction. And it undermines the decisions parents have made to find the best educational fit for their student. Imposing levels of requirements based on a public school model of education does not help education overall.

Thank you for your consideration. And commitment to the education of Oregon's children in all forms.

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