

Tuesday March 16th, 2021

Dear Chairman Dembrow,

I, and my husband, write today in strong opposition to SB 223. This bill, by requiring Oregon's private schools and institutions, to register with the state in order that our children to receive access to OSAA sponsored activities, is not necessary and creates yet another layer of red tape and wasteful bureaucracy. It undermines the autonomy of our private schools by making it subject to needless oversight and it is a significant threat to our religious freedom and parental choice. We are taxpaying citizens who have chosen an alternative to public schools to educate our children in the manner that we see fit and that aligns with our family values. We do this at our own expense as the benefit of our tax dollars do not support in the education of our own children. Regardless, our children should still receive fair and equal access to the extracurricular opportunities that the rest of the children in the state get and should not have that predicated on the regulatory whims of the state.

I think it is important to note that I am currently a passionate teacher in the public education system and have myself worked in several elementary and middle schools. I have seen the absolute beauty of that system and have worked tirelessly for the sake of the students I have taught. But I have also seen the failures and it is precisely because of that inconsistency that my husband and I have sought out a more stable and rigorous education for our child. An education that is not bound by needless red tape. We do not believe this bill serves any other purpose than to open the door for the state to gain control over the content of curriculum and school operations of private schools down the road, a move I strongly oppose.

Oregonians have a long history of being independent, in not only our beliefs but in the core of our very nature. I am a staunch Oregonian who has never entered the political arena before in any other capacity than voting. I have never written a letter nor given public testimony, preferring only to do my job and raise my children as I see fit. However, I am now speaking out as I feel very strongly that this bill unfairly punishes our children and private schools by removing opportunities and by adding an unnecessary monetary burden on private schools, on the state, and on our communities. I do believe that if the state chooses to pass this bill, there then becomes a very real argument for the state to begin paying our tax contributions to the school of our choice, don't you?

In closing, I ask that you stand with the strong independent nature of freedom loving Oregonians and vote NO on SB 223.

Thank you,

Rita and Christopher Brown