

As a native Oregonian who lives in Multnomah County, I have attended private schools as well as sent my children to private schools. I support the public schools with my taxes and have family members who work/ed for the Oregon public school districts. I also have a family member who has worked in the private schools. A great financial sacrifice is made when choosing to either enroll your children or work for a private school. We chose to refinance our home to pay for our children's tuition. Many times it was more than our mortgage, but it was a choice we made and valued. My sister, who was a teacher in both the public and private sector, said she could make a higher income and have better benefits working part-time in a public school than working full-time in a private school and receiving free tuition for her two children. So, why do we make such sacrifices? Because we value the grounded teachings that are offered through the private schools.

So, why is SB 223 undermining the freedom of parents to choose where they want to have their children receive their education, especially since the parents are paying double (taxes for public schools and tuition for private)? The measure begins with how private schools "may become" registered with the Dept of Ed and then states how those that do not are "punishable" by imprisonment and/or fines. How is that a choice?! Next, if private schools do not register, the students are punished by not being able to become members of a "voluntary" organization that administers interscholastic activities unless registered. This can hinder the students ability to try new venues and even pursue college scholarships. In the future to be registered will schools will have to adhere to the influences of the Dept of Ed and even pay a fee to comply with the registration?

It does not make any sense to take away our freedom to choose where we want our children to be educated nor to give a school an option to register then punish them if they don't comply. Does this mean those families who choose to homeschool will be targeted next?

The only reason I can surmise SB 223 coming forward is to void and nullify private schools. Therefore, using our children as pawns to gain more finances for the struggling public schools while moving forward their agendas. If passed, I can see lawsuits challenging SB 223, which I will be financially supporting.

Please do not support SB 223 and let the freedom of the parents remain to choose what is the best option to support the success of their children and the private schools.