

I am writing to urge the committee to reject SB0223. This legislation will establish new government regulations on institutions that do not need or want it. Private schools already have a system for direct and responsive oversight - parents. If we do not like something in the private school, we demand immediate action or we remove our children. The government should trust parents make sound decisions for their children's education.

This bill is not narrowly tailored, as Sen Dembrow suggests. While the legislation's current intent is to "register" private schools, later bureaucrats could seize upon its broad language in Section 2(4) to impose new standards on teacher selection (subsections a and b), the operations of the school (subsection c), and the curriculum (subsections d, e, and f). My children's private school already far exceeds public schools in these areas, and one of the main reasons is the lack of government interference. For example, my children have had full time, on-campus learning since September 2020 because the principal found creative ways to educate that complied with every health and safety guideline and then had the will to implement them quickly. Now she is getting featured (twice) on the news, and her methods are being copied by public schools in the area. The broad language in Section 2(4) represents a real danger to the autonomy and flexibility which can make private schools great learning institutions.

Teacher misconduct is a very real problem, but not every problem in society requires a new government solution. The bill has an admirable intent - to protect children from predatory teachers. Sadly, even the best licensing program cannot eliminate the risk. Every profession has unethical and immoral people. Administrators, teachers, and parents are the best lines of defense against predators, not far away government bureaucrats.

Lastly, the annual registration process creates an additional administrative burden on schools. Private schools will have to take money out of academic programs in order to pay for this new process. If the state wants private schools to register, then it should compensate the schools for the time and effort needed to comply.