

**Testimony on Senate Bill 223: Private School Registration  
March 19, 2021**

**TO:** Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair; Senator Thomsen, Vice-Chair; members of the Senate Committee on Education

**FROM:** Victoria Kovalenko, Concerned Parent, Private School Staff Member

**RE: Statement Opposing SB 223**

I have spent the last 21 years in the state of Oregon. I have gone through the Oregon public education system and I loved it. I participated in sports, drama, music, science club, and I made a strong friendships that I still value to this day. My other two siblings were not so fortunate to have this experience. The Oregon education system failed them.

My son also did not share this experience, which is why I chose to switch him over to private school. In fact, before making the decision to enroll him in private school I had one final meeting with his teachers, the principal, and the district psychologist. At this meeting we discussed where he was struggling and I presented his psychological evaluation from Pacific University, where they made suggestions on how to help him improve in school. As a second grader, it was concerning that he was reading at a kindergarten reading level. The entire staff from Beaverton School District refused to implement the suggestions in the psychological eval claiming that his “cognitive abilities were too high.”

Every day I had to listen to my son come home and tell me he wasn’t smart. He was dumb. He wasn’t good at anything. Every. Day. Do you know how disheartening that is? I left that meeting in tears, yelling that I was going to sue them. But after some reflection, I just decided I wanted no part of the public school system for my son, and researched schools that had small class sizes and would provide him the support he needed. I found it at Pilgrim Lutheran Christian School.

Education as a whole is not a one size fits all. I do not believe ODE needs to spend its time putting together committees to micro manage private schools. ODE should be fixing what is broken in public schools! Put together a committee that solves the abysmal graduation rate. Figure out how to have smaller class sizes. This is what the priority should be. Focus on what’s broken.

I sincerely hope you listen to the testimonies of those with experiences like mine and vote No against SB 223.