

Dear Chairman Dembrow,

I strongly oppose SB 223. This bill is a significant threat to religious freedom and parental choice. It also undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the state.

SB 223 would essentially force private schools to register with the state or cut off student access to choir, sports, and other interscholastic programs. Our schools already prioritize student safety, this bill goes too far, is unnecessary, and simply unfair. This bill punishes our children by excluding them (unless we give up our parental choice and religious freedoms to become subjected to oversight by the state) from enriching extracurricular activities that are currently offered to both public and private school students. This bill serves no purpose but to strong arm schools into giving up their religious freedoms in order for students to participate in extracurricular activities with public schools.

Our school is currently a member of OSAA, and my children participate in choir, soccer, and track. Why would you take this opportunity away from my child, especially after the isolation created due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

SB 223 adds unnecessary expenses to private schools and early childhood programs. The Legislature passed a law in 2019 to protect private school students, and SB 223 is unnecessary in light of that legislation.

My children attend Willamette Valley Christian School, but it shouldn't matter what type of school our children attend. I pay for my children to attend private school, and I also pay Oregon taxes that pay for Oregon's public education system. My children should have the same ability to participate in extracurricular activities as their public school peers without forcing us to give up our religious freedoms to become under the oversight of the state.

Please don't use our students as leverage in political fights. I ask you to stand with parents, like me and vote 'NO' on SB 223. It's unnecessary and will only harm our children.

Sincerely,
Destinee Schuster, Parent
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