

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.

Our family chose to move from Montana to Oregon in 2017 and our primary reason for moving was to enroll our children at Salem Academy. We place a high value on education and we wanted to find the most excellent school environment for our children. We made this very specific choice because this private school best served specific needs of our children.

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 is unnecessary and it goes too far.

Our school is currently a member of OSAA, and my children participate in volleyball, music, and many other programs that would be affected. Our kids have already lost so much during the pandemic. They've faced isolation and academic and developmental delays due to Covid-19 restrictions. They are in great need of re-engaging in interscholastic programs. Why would you want to remove these opportunities from our children?

We have made great sacrifices to invest in private education for our children in addition to paying Oregon taxes that pay for the public education of other Oregon students. My children deserve the right to participate in interscholastic programs and they should not be discriminated against by the state simply because they attend a private school. My children deserve to have the same opportunities as Oregon public school peers.

Please do not use my children as tools to leverage a political agenda. Please stand with parents and do what's right for our children and vote 'NO' on SB 223. This bill will harm children and should not be supported by anyone who cares for the wellbeing of Oregon kids.