

March 13, 2021

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

I strongly urge you not to pass SB 223. Our family is a farming family that has lived in Oregon all of our lives. Our children attended a small private school in Cornelius, Oregon, over the course of 24 years. Our son now attends a private high school in Hillsboro. We value freedom to worship and educate our children according to our constitutional rights.

We thank you for volunteering to serve our state, and representing our family in Oregon.

The Supreme Court has upheld parents' First and Fourteenth Amendment rights as they relate to education. Over 50,000 Oregon schoolchildren choose private schools. We desire to continue this practice and encourage you to allow private schools freedom.

Currently, ODE policy states that non-public education is recognized as a vital part of Oregon's educational system. Private schools do not have to register with the State of Oregon, unless they are contracting with public school district for services. SB 223 would change this and would require private schools to register with ODE annually. We ask you not to make this change.

If private schools are required to have ODE approval for all plans and procedures, they will become de facto public schools. This is a grave threat to the future of private schools, religious freedom, parental rights and school choice. SB 223 would undermine the broad educational goals of private education as well as essentially eliminate private schools' jurisdiction over their own schools.

Please continue to allow religious freedom in Oregon, as well as freedom to educate as we choose.

Thank you for your representation.

Best regards,

Kelly Hering, David Hering, and Daniel Hering (student at Faith Bible High School)