

The Supreme Court has upheld parents' First and Fourteenth Amendment rights as they relate to education. The First Amendment grants parents the right to choose education for their children that doesn't interfere with their religious beliefs. I have taught in the public system and have intentionally pulled my kids out of it and placed them in public school, for many reasons.

1. Competence - State schools have proven unreliable to provide a quality education, not just in content but in rigor. Their inability to utilize wisdom in regard to how to teach all students leaves much to be desired, typically forcing teachers to either leave some students behind or stunt the growth and development of others. I would rather send my kids to a school where the teachers have the freedom and wisdom to navigate their classrooms, even if the teacher isn't "qualified" in the state's eyes than send them to a public school with "qualified" teachers who have their hands tied. I do not want the state deciding for me who is and isn't qualified to teach my kids. This bill would give the state the power to decide for me who is and isn't qualified to teach my kids. Given their incompetence in virtually every other area, why would I want to give them more power.

2. Religious convictions - I realize the state has opinions on various matters of morality, and despite the idea that you can receive a neutral education, it is logically impossible to be neutral in regard to morality. So, when the state's (anti)religious convictions become diametrically opposed to ours, what recourse do we have other than to place our kids in an environment that is in alignment with our beliefs? Given the state's continued opposition to objective morality and even the Church's increased capitulation to the state's worldview, this bill should be opposed in order to maintain religious liberty.

3. Inefficiency - Again, having been through the system myself, as a student and a teacher, the amount of time kids have to spend in the classroom is appalling. When a student can get all their work done in one day that was intended to last a week, something's amiss. For this bill to indicate the state would have a say in how long a kid should be in a classroom assumes the private schools aren't more efficient than the state schools. Currently, my kids go to school half as long as my neighbors' kids, who are in public school, and the difference in how they're being equipped is grievous and laughable at the same time. Again, to give more power to a system that has proven so abominably inefficient is insane.

For these reasons, and a host of others, Senate Bill 223 must be rejected.