

Dear Chairman Dembrow,

I strongly oppose SB 223. This bill threatens our religious freedom and choice as parents. It undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the state.

My husband and I have made the choice to enroll our daughter in a private Christian school for this school year 20/21. We chose to enroll her in a faith-based, private education because of how disappointed we were at how the state has been handling public schools and the Covid-19 response. This is our choice as parents and we should get to make that choice.

SB 223 would 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 and this bill goes too far.

It is unfair to punish our children by excluding them from these extracurricular activities that are currently offered to public and private school students. Our school is a member of OSAA, and while my child does not currently participate in athletics in high school level, she is looking forward to playing volleyball for her high school and this would squash that dream.

Our daughter attends Santiam Christian School and we chose this because of the faith-based curriculum and everything that the private schools allow and don't allow to happen in their very important 30 plus hours a week with our child.

It should not matter what type of school our daughter attends, I still pay Oregon taxes that pay for Oregon's public education system. Our child should have the same ability to participate in extracurricular activities as her friends in public schools.

Please don't use our children as leverage in political fights because that is what this bill feels like. Please stand with us parents and vote no on SB 223.