

Dear Senator, We are writing you because we 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 children's educational needs are best served by our private Christian school. We choose to enroll our children in faith-based, private education. That was our choice as a parent. SB 223 would force sports leagues and other organizations—such as National Honor Society, the Oregon Association of Student Councils, and Future Farmers of America—to kick out non-registered private schools as the "price" of having chapters at Oregon public schools. SB 223 would make many private schools and their students outcasts in the world of interscholastic sports and every other activity, denying those students opportunities to participate with the rest of the community and damaging their college prospects. Our schools already prioritize student safety, but this bill goes too far. It's unfair to punish our children by excluding them from enriching extracurricular activities that are currently offered to both public and private school students. SB 223 adds expenses to private schools and early childhood programs with little (if any) benefit to the schools or students served by them. The Legislature passed a law in 2019 to protect private school students, and SB 223 is unnecessary in light of that legislation.

SB 223 must be rejected. It is a mean-spirited attempt to force private schools to conform to public school standards or face steep social and financial consequences. It violates the rights of private schools and their students, as well as the rights of public school districts and the organizations that provide interscholastic activities to thousands of Oregon students.

Please do not pass SB223. It infringes on the rights of private schools per the 14th amendment which allows freedom of choice for parents to educate their children as they see fit. SB223 is an attempt to integrate private schools into the public school system which is not acceptable. We already pay taxes for public schools in addition to tuition for private schools. It is the right of private education to remain separate, SB223 is an overreach into private citizens rights.

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

Thank you in advance for voting "NO" for SB223.

Sincerely,

Mark and Lauri Speelman and family