

Dear Chairman,

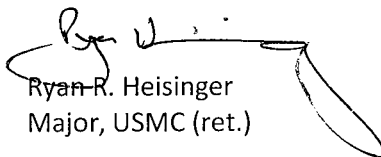
To put it up front, I strongly oppose SB 223. As a retired US Marine Corps Officer, I served and fought for my country so that everyone has the freedom and liberties to choose what they personally feel is best for their family and specifically how they choose to raise their children. This bill is a significant threat not only to a family's choice on where they want to send their children for their schooling and upbringing, but it also infringes on their religious freedom.

Secondly, this bill also undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the state. This again is an over step by the state to control a family's choice on selecting the type of school and curriculum. It also adds the threat of not allowing the school to participate in OSAA sanctioned sports and other various extracurricular activities if they do not conform. This threat is an attack on personal choice and overall liberties for families to choose their school. As a tax payer, my funds support all school activities for public schools, therefore SB 223 would then have to look at the ramifications and impacts of barring private schools from participating in which private school families pay taxes on.

In summation, my children's educational needs are best served by our private Christian school. My wife and I chose to enroll our children in faith-based, private education. This was our choice as a parent. 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, but this bill goes too far and would ultimately punish our children by excluding them from enriching extracurricular activities that are currently offered to both public and private school students. In closing, my children should have the same ability to participate in extracurricular activities as their public school peers.

Please do not use my children and the students at private Christian schools as leverage in political fights. I ask you to stand with parents, like me, and vote 'NO' on SB 223. It is unnecessary and will only harm our children, especially given the past fourteen months of the COVID pandemic.

Respectfully,



Ryan R. Heisinger
Major, USMC (ret.)