

Submitter: Trevor Peterson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I am writing to voice opposition to SB767. I am a founding board member for Classical Quest for Education. This bill was created as a direct result of our efforts to bring about a classical charter school in southern Oregon. As I read some of the arguments made by those supporting the bill, I feel it necessary to clarify a few important items. I have read that an “out of state” organization is seeking to take advantage of Oregon law and school districts. This is a complete mischaracterization. My board, Classical Quest for Education, started 18 months ago as a group of local Pinehurst and Ashland parents and community members looking to provide an additional unique schooling option currently not available in southern Oregon. It was indeed our “quest” to bring a Classical education option to the valley. We never had any intentions of starting a classical model from scratch but rather hoped to find a good pairing with an existing Classical Education model being utilized in charter schools throughout the country. We explored many options looking not to reinvent the wheel but to use an existing model that was tried and true. We discovered the John Adams Academy charter schools located in the Sacramento area and engaged in discussions with them. After many hours of conversations and many visits to John Adams Academy we decided we wanted to pursue a relationship with them. They agreed to join with us to bring the first ever John Adams Academy out of California and into the great state of Oregon. Both Classical Quest for Education and John Adams Academy are non profit organizations. The characterization that an “out of state” group is trying to manipulate and take advantage of Oregon school districts is at minimum uniformed and frankly absurd. We pursued sponsorship with the rural district of Pinehurst primarily because the President of our board is a 3rd generation resident of that district and wanted to see this option made available to her family and the other families in the district looking for alternatives to Ashland middle school and high school. We had legal counsel and ODE look into our plan for a campus in Pinehurst with a satellite campus in the valley. We felt confident Oregon charter law was on our side and our plan was perfectly legal. Months after submission of the application, Pinehurst school board hired legal counsel to look into the matter and legality and our interpretation of the law was brought into question. At that juncture the ODE made an official ruling regarding our specific situation and ruled it legal. Powerful people then gathered in a special meeting with the goal of a “legislative fix” looking to change the current law and recent ruling. The result of that meeting is Senate Bill 767. I personally find it disheartening and disturbing that we as local community members we were merely exercising our rights according to the law only to be blindsided by a sudden proposal to change the very law most applicable to our cause. It feels like an injustice for our group to go through this process only to have the rules of the game change and the

goal post moved. Thousands of hours and tens of thousands of dollars of personal money has been donated to get to where we are. This bill is an attack against our proposed school and an attack against the parents and children that want and deserve a John Adams Academy Classical Education. The data is out and it is clear that Oregonians from all political parties want more options for school choice. It has become the tipping point political issue in elections around the country. It is time for Oregon legislators to take a stand with their constituents and take the time to listen to what is needed and wanted. Please consider the context for this bill and vote NO.