

Submitter: Susan Reams
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I am a retired public employee, attended and graduated from 2 colleges in Oregon, and have lived in Oregon for 47 years. I am active in our community as a volunteer 4H Leader, and at our place of worship. My husband and I have 2 children who attended both public and private schools here in Oregon, who have grown to be responsible adults who contribute to their communities. Our son served in the Armed Forces for 6 years, and our daughter is a nurse. Today I am writing because I believe that SB1583 should not be passed, and want to tell you why, from my perspective as an active member of our community who works regularly with youth.

In short, all levels of administration of public education are already governed by existing local, state and federal law, and they represent the racial and economic diversity of the district that they serve.

Point 1: It is not necessary to exert control over decisions made by school district boards in Oregon, because school district boards already follow state and federal laws pertaining to their roles and responsibilities. They are locally elected, and have a vested interest in the future of the children in their community. They are aware of the cultural and economic effects within their communities. School boards across Oregon consist of many gifted board members who are capable of critical decision making in the setting of their unique community.

Point 2: It is not necessary to exert control over every decision made by parents or primary caregivers with regard to raising their child. Every parent knows that every child is unique, and must be shepherded gently through life as they grow and become confident adults. Parents have the right to raise their children without worrying about another person making decisions that would affect their child. Existing state and federal laws protect children from parents who are not capable of raising their children safely.

Point 3: If SB 1583 passed, another layer of public employees would have to be hired to enforce it. This bill does not have funding for the cost of enforcing it, to my knowledge. Who would these overseers be? What are their backgrounds, their awareness of culture and economy of the communities? Who will they answer to, whose example will they follow?

In summary: The need to exert control by a state agency over locally led leadership and parental care is not necessary, it is already being accomplished by those who know it best, have a vested interest, and are most accountable.

My closing thought comes from a story set in Austria during the Nazi occupation. Maria Van Trapp wrote that shortly after the beginning of the occupation, her children stopped talking to her about school. When she asked them why they no longer discussed school topics with her, they said "the teachers told us that our parents were foolish, and to not tell them what they were learning in school". If we have

learned anything from history, it is this: we must make sure that locally led school boards and parents are fully involved and are capable of making decisions for local children's education.