

Deb Mayer
Parents Across America Oregon, OPEN
Public testimony on HB 4013
February 14, 2018

Hello Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee,

I wrote this blog in response to the public testimony I witnessed on Feb 7th on Hb 4013. You Probably Think This Bill Is about You -- Public Comment on HB 4013
<http://www.paaoregon.org/single-post/2018/02/11/You-Probably-Think-This-Bill-Is-about-You---Public-Comment-on-HB-4013>

I support HB 4013 as originally written. Kim Sordyl has organized a campaign to protest the bill saying that it intentionally targets her and attempts to remove her from the position she currently holds. Her claims subvert the intent of the bill. I have had dealings with Kim S. In the past. She has attempted to discredit my testimony to OSBE and impugn my reputation as an educator and researcher. Last year after I testified to the OSBE, she sent emails to people, behind my back, saying that I was dishonest and otherwise assaulted my character. I was surprised she sent the emails to PPS school board members and friends of mine.

Fortunately, a friend BCC'd me on a response to the email, or I wouldn't have known about it. I felt compelled to respond. Here is what I said in response to Sordyl's damaging email dated March 24, 2017. I have redacted names of other people mentioned. Someone like Kim Sordyl should not command so much of my time and attention. If, in her position, she maligns the testimony of others, she is misusing this position.

After I wrote this response and sent it to all cc'd on the original, she left me alone — as far as I know. I'm submitting this testimony anticipating it will draw additional ire from Sordyl.

I'm not sure why Kim Sordyl sent out this email or why particular people are cc'd on it. I do, however feel compelled to respond.

I went to Salem Thursday to testify about EdTech (personalized or digital learning), not SBAC. I had already testified last week about SBAC — in support of Lew Frederick's SB351, and additionally calling for a suspension of the test and the MOU with SBAC. [REDACTED] did report on her findings about the cost of SBAC both last week and Thursday, March 23rd.

I had a short conversation with Kim S. at the end of the day as everyone was heading out. [REDACTED] joined in the conversation a bit later as she was walking by. We both liked some of the questions Kim raised during the day and wanted to touch base with her. I exchanged contact information with Kim and told her about our Parents Across America Oregon website. I don't recall Kim mentioning OSOS to either of us. If she had I would have responded proudly as I always do. "I am a co-founder and member of OSOS."

I now spend most of my time, though, working with Parents Across America. We are an all volunteer organization, so I guess you could say we work on our own — together. I am on the PAA national board and enjoy working with like-minded people who do original research and build relationships with others across the country. We know and trust each other and can compare notes on legislation and policy from state to state. We meet regularly online and a couple of times each year at conferences.

OSOS and PAA have been linked from the beginning. OSOS adopted PAA's beliefs and vision early on. [REDACTED] and I attended PAA's leadership conference in the early years of OSOS. [REDACTED] is listed as the OSOS affiliate contact person now, I believe. CAPE, the organization in Eugene that [REDACTED] belongs to, is also an affiliate of Parents Across America. I can't speak for [REDACTED], but I didn't hear Kim mention OSOS to her during our conversation. We are all connected and support each other.

I am often cautious about meeting new people because I have been trolled so many times both online and in person. I have also been the object of unprovoked attacks both online and in-person. I make no pretense about my advocacy for strong public schools and teachers. I claim ownership of the research I do and the articles I write. I don't agree with everything Diane Ravitch says or does, but I love her for her advocacy for strong public schools.

As for working with dishonest people. I encourage people not to disparage a person's character just because they disagree with them. For example, today Salam said a couple of things that didn't quite ring true. He said the SBAC tests cost only about \$9.5 million a year. He also said the state didn't have a definition for "personalized learning." Was he being dishonest? He may not actually know the answers to these questions. I hope he examines [REDACTED]'s very well-resourced work about the cost of the tests. I hope he investigates to find out about the harm "personalized learning" can do to students. He did seem to be sincerely shocked at the idea that parents should be notified about the state's transition to edtech or "personalized learning." He was dismayed to hear a parent testify against it. I hope he can be educated. Kim, I hope you work with us and take us seriously.

As I mentioned to Kim yesterday. We have a lot of research to share. We are problem solvers. We care deeply about children and their futures. We're here to help. Honestly.

Sincerely,

*Deb Mayer
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