

Chairman Bell and Committee Members,

My name is Theresa Deckert. I serve as the Office Administrator for the North Dakota Home School Association (NDHSA) and am also on the board of directors. I homeschooled my own children for 33 years and now am able to help tutor my homeschooled grandchildren.

The position of our state association is neutral on this bill, but I am offering personal testimony rather than on behalf of the NDHSA. Approval of this bill would be a small help to families who choose to homeschool their children. Parents make that choice for various reasons, sometimes that is an easy choice, but often it is very difficult. Many feel they really have no other choice.

As the office administrator for the NDHSA, I am the one who answers the phone and helps parents get started with homeschooling. I hear the stories and the frustration of many parents. Many opt for homeschooling because they do not feel that special needs issues their child has are being met by their local school and they don't have the option of a private school in their area. Some families feel homeschooling is their only option because their child is being bullied and the situation remains unresolved. Some begin homeschooling because their local district told them they had to because their child was being expelled for disorderly conduct (*yes, there are children in ND who are being denied a free public education*). Sometimes a child is dealing with mental or other health related issues and homeschooling is the only option. Finally many families have a deeply held religious belief that causes them to reject public education as their faith cannot be taught there.

None of the families mentioned above probably chose homeschooling as their first option, but rather felt they had no other choice. Most of these stories come from rural districts where there are no private schools.

I tutor one of my grandsons each week because of dyslexia issues. His parents have purchased a top notch curriculum which is working well, but any special needs curriculum is at least double the cost of a regular curriculum.

I estimate my family alone has saved the state over half a million dollars by me educating my own four children for all 12 grades plus kindergarten. A \$500 tax credit is a small compensation for families who truly take responsibility for their child's education. Please vote yes.

Thank you,  
Theresa Deckert  
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