

Members of the Education Committee and Chair,

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony in support of North Dakota HB 1472. My name is Rebekah Drahosh and I live in Jamestown, ND. I am married to Caleb and we have six children ages 3 – 11 years old. This is my sixth year homeschooling and I currently have two kindergarteners, a third grader, a fourth grader, and a sixth grader.

We are fortunate to be partnering with a small group of like-minded homeschool parents. The families in our homeschool co-op share convictions in both faith and educational philosophy. We follow a Classical Christian Curriculum that is incredibly rigorous. My children benefit deeply from this small, like-minded community of learners and from my direct involvement in their education. I consider it a privilege to bear the responsibility for my children's education.

We are in the process of transitioning our current homeschool group into a formal school, but find it challenging due to ND state code. Starting a formal school gives us the opportunity to invite families to participate in our educational model who are unable to homeschool. Constitutionally, all American citizens have the right to educate their children in a place that aligns with their faith. In this way, education is an issue of religious freedom.

This bill would allow us to exercise our freedom of religion in a smaller school setting by eliminating the need to meet burdensome and unnecessary state requirements. The benefits of approving this bill positively impact us by giving us the freedom to create an educational environment that can be hospitable to those who share our faith values but do not have the ability to homeschool their children.

Additionally, education is far more effective when there are fewer students for each teacher or parent to instruct. This scenario ensures that the child will be receiving the appropriate level of attention – that his or her errors would be corrected in a timely way, that his or her struggles would be noticed more quickly and helped, that his or her strengths would be recognized and praised. Small schools naturally have the benefit of caring for the specific educational needs of each student. They also promote mental health by encouraging deep, cross-generational relationships due to the smaller number of people involved.

Please decide in favor of passing this bill. The microschool model will greatly benefit students, parents, families, communities, and ultimately the state of North Dakota.

Rebekah Drahosh

Jamestown, ND

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