

As a public school teacher and a parent of two children attending a rural public school, I am opposed to any measures that siphon funding away from our public schools. Voucher programs, or in this case, education savings accounts, redirect public funds to private schools, primarily benefiting families who can already afford private education.

In North Dakota, most families—especially those in rural areas—lack access to private schools. I am proud to teach in a small town where our school serves as a cornerstone of the community. Our school supports students from several surrounding towns, with some children spending hours each day traveling by bus. The closest private school is 40 miles away, which would add yet another hour to students' commutes.

Proponents of these programs often frame them as providing “choice” in education. However, when private schools are inaccessible, as they are for the majority of rural families in North Dakota, there is no real choice. In fact, only 32% of North Dakota counties have access to a private school. For the rest of us, the best choice is a well-funded, high-quality public school close to home.

I urge you to stand with rural families and public school educators by opposing voucher programs and supporting robust funding for public schools. Our children deserve equitable access to education, regardless of where they live.