

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2288

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Good morning Madam Chair Bell and honorable members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma, Executive Director of Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2288 and respectfully request that you recommend a “DO PASS” on this bill.

Under this bill, individual and/or corporate taxpayers would receive tax credits in return for contributions to registered, nonprofit scholarship granting organizations (SGO). There are currently 18 states with similar policies, so this is not a new or untested practice. These policies vary in terms of eligibility, testing, and other regulations.

The SGO described in this bill may be thought of as a type of clearinghouse – a place where taxpayers’ money is matched to eligible students. The powerful part is that this mechanism expands educational opportunity, which is particularly relevant for families that can least afford it. Ultimately, the purpose of SGOs is to help as many students as possible gain access to greater educational opportunity.

Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota strongly supports this method of providing educational opportunity. We believe that the best educational system is one that gives children a wide-open future and the tools to explore God’s calling in their lives, under the loving and protecting guidance of their parents. Parents know their children best and are in the best position to make decisions about their children’s education. We want to advance policies that empower parents to have decision-making power when it comes to their children’s classrooms. A future full of choices for children, needs a present full of options.

Please vote Senate Bill 2288 out of committee with a “DO PASS” recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will stand for any questions you may have.