

**Amanda Crane**

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Dear Chair Heinert and committee members,

I am in favor of House Bill 1376 that would allow students to participate in a choice virtual program. This school year I was interested in enrolling my students in the Yellowstone Virtual Academy in Fairview, North Dakota. It is my understanding that we were denied this opportunity because “school choice” is not clearly defined and our superintendent was able to make the decision for us, using the language “we don’t believe the legislative intent of North Dakota state education funding was designed to provide public school students with a virtual education in a program that is provided by a third-party and offered to students out of the school district.”

I not coming from a public school. I have been an at home educator in some way or another for the past 10 years. I began my home education journey in California with support from a virtual school much like Yellowstone Virtual Academy. This has continued to be the way in which I have educated my children at home until moving to North Dakota. A common thread of each of these public programs was direct access to personalized educational support with a state certified teacher with whom I could meet in person or via phone or email anytime I needed. Additionally, we were motivated and kept on track by weekly accountability, record keeping, and access to supplemental educational resources. We were provided standards aligned curriculum and could participate in standardized testing to gain feedback on whether we were keeping pace, meeting, or exceeding the state standards.

Without these public options I have still chosen to educate at home while living here in North Dakota. We have loved what educating at home provides for our family and the educational opportunities available for our children. In the past 6 years we have moved 6 times and 3 states. Our occupation has been in retail, which could be considered our number one reason for continuing to school at home. Weekends and holidays are normal workdays. To allow for any family time we have to do things differently. Additionally, our moves have been within a few miles to thousands of miles from the previous home. Regardless of the distance, each one of them would have required a school change. There has even been a year that we schooled on the road because of how much travel we were doing. We not only lived through the year 2020, but thrived. Any one of these challenges could have had a negative impact on my children’s progress and learning. Since we school at

home we can individualize the delivery of standards aligned curriculum provided by these public programs and keep continuity and consistency. This is also a reason we choose to do school during the summer months, making education seamless.

I am not North Dakota grown but this is the state where my children are being raised and I am definitely advocating for choice programming and innovative opportunities. I imagine North Dakota wants to promote industry and growth and opportunity for the state; we want the people who come here to have the opportunity to get the education they need for their family. This supports our economic growth and success as a state. People are understanding they have options and they need and want them.

As you can see I had abundantly more innovative educational opportunities 10 years ago and across multiple states than I currently have here in North Dakota. Please help bring innovation to our North Dakota students and don't deny them of having educational opportunities that have become available within the state. Additionally, I believe parents should have the right to choose for their students to attend schools available in the state, regardless of resident district. I believe in educational choice and I believe that the choice should be left to the parents.

Please vote yes to HB 1376

Sincerely,

Amanda Crane