

Marc Bluestone
Superintendent
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Re: SB 2260 relating to Parental Rights

Dear House Human Services Committee Members:

I am submitting this letter in opposition to SB 2260 which relates to parental rights. I am the superintendent at New Town School District #1 in New Town, North Dakota.

This bill is invasive to the day-to-day operations of a school system by requiring teachers, who are extremely capable in the design and delivery of quality instruction, to be subjected to the objections of parents who are not qualified to determine subject matter content. I would not deem myself qualified to walk into a court of law and defend a criminal because I have watched an entire season of Law and Order. I would not step into an operating room and attempt brain surgery after watching a YouTube video of the procedure. Nor would I propose legislation that would give me the ability to have the right to practice or control either of these things without an extensive college education. Parents are not trained to understand the scope and sequence of content instruction. They do not possess the understanding of child development and the instructional strategies that will best suit a classroom of 20 to 30 students. The requirement that teachers gain implied consent from parents of what they are uniquely qualified to do hampers their ability to provide quality instruction. What happens on a day when a teachable moment arises that was not in the plan made available seven days previous to parents? Does the teacher have to stifle creative thought because an inquisitive student poses a question that takes the discussion off track and was not anticipated seven days ago? Since when did parents become experts in the field of education? Furthermore, since when did the State Legislature become experts in the field of education? Many of you are educated. Without the education provided to you from your local schools, would you have obtained the status of where you are at? I doubt it.

The availability of surveillance cameras in schools has been one of the greatest things to support the safety and security of schools. Our school district has spent more than \$300,000 to install security systems to make it safer for students and staff. We have had threats to our school. We have had threats from students who state that they will bring a gun to school and “shoot up the school”. We have had reports of knives in the school. We have had various contraband brought to the school. Security cameras have assisted us in catching these students. We use them “not to spy on kids and staff”, we use them as they were intended which is to provide for school safety. We have installed security doors, security windows, and Barracuda security door devices that can be installed in a matter of seconds in emergency situations to protect classrooms against building intruders. Our school district also employs a School Resource Officer as well. School security is extremely important to our school district. We practice fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills. To need parent approval before conducting these types of activities hampers our ability to use them and is irresponsible at best.

As an educator for over thirty years, I have seen a sad change in our society when it comes to education. There is a constant lack of trust in our ability to prepare tomorrow’s leaders. Each year, we have more statutory requirements. Staff have grown tired of the constant barrage against our public schools. Many teachers have retired early or have simply left the profession. At some point, this constant barrage must stop. Have faith in your local schools. Every day educators work in the best interest of the children in

their community. I have yet to meet a teacher who doesn't believe in the ability of their students. Every one of them wants to bring out the very best in their students. Education is a profession. Let these trained professionals do what they do best.....teach our children to become productive citizens and tomorrow's leaders. Have faith in our teachers around the state. They are entrusted with shaping the future which is an important responsibility. Let them teach. If parents want to take over the profession, let them get the training and join our ranks of educators. We need all the help we can get, not constant attacks. Educators make a difference in the lives of our children. Across this country and especially rural America, there is a huge shortage of teachers. The more that you attack the profession with legislation that limits our ability to teach, the less people will want to become teachers.

I would be shocked to learn that any of you on the committee could make the statement that you didn't have teachers who made a difference in your own personal lives. Education is the one of the greatest professions. Assist us, don't hurt us.

I ask that the Committee give this bill a DO NOT PASS.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc S. Bluestone Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a distinct 'Sr.' at the end.

Marc S. Bluestone Sr.
Superintendent
New Town School District #1