

My name is Cara Transtrom, I am employed by the Mandaree School District #36 on Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, and this letter is being written in opposition to Senate Bill 2260.

There are so very many issues with this bill that I'm hard-pressed to know which issues with which to even begin. So I will focus on addressing just two major concerns out of the many that I have with this bill: 1) the stated parental "right to make reasonable choices within a public school for the education of the child" and 2) the usurping of the local school board's elected authority.

This bill is attempting to pass measures that ultimately constitute unreasonable--NOT "reasonable"--choices within a public school. Here's why:

Demanding that teachers release all lesson plans and components 7 days prior to instruction so that all materials can be reviewed by all parents creates an unreasonable, unprecedented, unsustainable, and frankly impossible situation for reasons that we will now review:

First, let's say that a teacher has 150 students and teaches 6 classes daily (fairly typical for a high-school teacher). Let's suggest that approximately 80% of the biological parents are alive and have some category of legal custody: this now gives us 240 custodial parents. Now let's consider that perhaps 35% of the children have a stepparent with some custodial rights: that gives us an additional 45 custodial adults.

This now gives us a total of 285 possible parents. (Please note: we haven't even touched the category of children without any custodial biological parents, but the prior numbers should be reasonably accurate whether we are speaking of appointed caretakers, legal guardians, adoptive parents, biological parents, stepparents, etc)

As someone who ran my own business for years, I'm here to tell you that if 285 different bosses have authority over one individual, it's a recipe for absurdity at every level, not to mention bankruptcy. Such a decision regarding hierarchy would be physically impossible to maintain, and it's even more impossible to justify why such a foolish decision would ever be made to abuse an employee like that in the first place. It would be the complete opposite of "reasonable expectations" by every definition of the term.

Now to address concern #2:

The local school board is already elected to represent local values, maintain educational standards, and effectively manage school operations. Such boards already maintain control over curriculum content choices, teacher/administrator/staff hiring and firing, standards of school employee behavior both inside and outside of the classroom, and operational management decisions over the entire school bureaucracy.

So if we already have school board officials elected by their local constituents into positions of authority to manage the concerns this bill addresses, why is this bill attempting to usurp the role

of these already-elected, already-serving individuals?

I repeat, a local school board has the authority and the mandate of the American taxpayer to manage all of the issues raised in this bill. If concerned citizens wish to abolish the role of local school boards, they are free to introduce such legislation and also to introduce legislation that replaces the roles and functions currently embodied by these elected officials.

If passed, this bill will not only encourage the *en masse* resignations of teachers throughout the entire state of North Dakota (a state that is already suffering from extreme teacher shortage, I might add), but it will also create a parallel, competing governance system in direct competition with the already-elected, already-mandated school board.

In closing, I will address what appears to be the actual elephant in the room and the direct impetus for the creation of this bill: the measures in this bill appear to seek to address parental concern and response to the lurid headlines we have seen in recent times featuring underage children being exposed to developmentally-inappropriate levels of information about biological sex, culturally-influenced gender expectations, and sexual orientation.

Responsible educators across the state share parental concerns that only developmentally-appropriate levels of information be shared with underage students regarding these issues. We recognize that these weighty, life-altering matters are heavily influenced by a literal host of factors: local family & community expectations, religious influences, national and ethnic origin, socio-economic status, scientific facts, peer pressure, national and local forms of social media, friend groups, and mental, emotional, and physical wellness, to name only a few.

I remind all parents and all fellow educators that these weighty issues are EXACTLY why we have elected local school boards in the first place: it is imperative that these elected individuals answer directly to the concerned, tax-paying citizens (that is why these officials have been elected in the first place, after all).

I thank you for your time in this matter, and I cannot more strongly encourage a NO vote for SB 2260