

Thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Andrew Yates, and I represent yes. every kid. We are a nonprofit dedicated to creating an environment where every student has access to an individualized learning experience. House Bill 1376 allows students to attend the public school that best meets their unique needs, regardless of attendance boundaries. A ZIP code should never dictate a child's opportunity, and we appreciate your willingness to focus on this important issue.

In North Dakota, where a child attends school is almost always determined by where he or she lives. This results in severe geographic inequities that can negatively impact a child's future success.

Residents can access public goods like parks, libraries, or hospitals regardless of where they live. However, children in North Dakota are too often denied access to quality public schools simply because their families cannot afford a home in a particular neighborhood.

HB1376 is a great first step to breaking down those barriers by allowing students to access the school that best fits their individual needs, learning environment, and specialized programs. This legislation moves us away from an institution-centered public school system to a more student-centered system.

We would also like to recommend a change we believe would help schools better provide for their communities. We would recommend an amendment that deletes lines 23 through 30 on page 2 and lines 1 through 6 on page three ((23-30 Pg 1& 1-6 Pg 3)). This amendment added to the bill, while purposed with good intent, hinders the ability for schools to adapt and enroll students as openings come available. There are countless reasons that children move schools throughout the year but one of the most glaring barriers we have is the beginning of the school year. Often there are students that do not return the next year for one reason or another. Without a continuous enrollment strategy, these spots will simply sit empty. Allow the schools to make the decisions regarding their capacity without arbitrary dates.

In closing I would like to reiterate: No child should be deprived of a quality education simply because of their ZIP code or family's income. This legislation will expand opportunities for North Dakota students while empowering families to make decisions that are in the best interest of their child. For these reasons, we respectfully ask for your favorable support of this legislation.

Thank you for your time.

Andrew Yates