

February 1, 2023

SB 2369

Senate Finance and Tax Committee

Hon. Jordan Kannianen

Good morning, Chairman Kannianen and the honorable members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee. I am Ryan Rintamaki and the constituent Senator Brad Bekkedahl mentioned in his introduction. I am here to testify in favor of SB 2369.

First, I would like to address why we are homeschooling. The United States is a representative republic and to paraphrase John Adams “can only survive with a moral and religious people.” One of the reasons we are homeschooling is that the public education system does not help reinforce the moral education students should be receiving at home. Along with the moral reinforcement, socialism should not be taught in our schools. When socialism is demonstrated in class by having students “go on strike” outside until they get ice cream, it provides positive reinforcement that it is a “good idea” to demand that you be given everything you want. Our country wasn’t made great by people stopping production and demanding that their needs be met, but by people putting their heads down and diligently working towards the goals that they have.

Next, I would like to address the financial side of this bill. Senator Bekkedahl has introduced an amendment to this bill that allows the state to reimburse the school district for the property tax credit. This means that the school district will not see a decrease in funding. On my own home, we paid approximately \$675 dollars to the local school district for 2022. We’re in a more affordable home and are on the lower end of the tax scale. Some of the other homes I looked at were as high as \$4,000 for the school portion of their property tax. Unfortunately I was not able to get the irrepealable tax information from our local school district in time for this hearing. I had hoped to be able provide a better idea of what the cost might be. But, assuming an average school portion of \$2,500 per student, with 12,405 students not enrolled in public school, this comes to approximately \$31 million. The state already covers the difference between the local taxes and the \$10,237 upper limit. Assuming that \$5,000 per student is already paid out by the state, the state would still be saving \$31 million, rather than having all students enrolled in public schools. This is a very rough estimate and is impacted by a number of different factors. These factors include the location of the home, the assessed value of the home, the irrepealable tax portion, and the number of students in the household.

Finally, I would like to address school choice. Many other states have gone or are going to a system of school choice where the state portion to fund education follows the student. For example, in Arizona, each student has \$7,000 follow them. I am not advocating for homeschools and nonpublic schools to receive this much money. Granted, I would love it if this were the case. We could bring our children to see many different historical locations. But I feel the property tax credit is a good compromise because homeschools and nonpublic schools would not be taking additional money out of the system. Instead, we would be keeping more of what we earned.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of SB 2369. I am willing to answer any question you may have.