

To whom it may concern,

My comments or testimony is in relation to HB 1172. As a mother who has children enrolled in NDCDE, I felt it was important to share my experience and thoughts on the matter. As a Republican, I am appalled that our Republicans brought forth this bill and support it. Not affording all children the ability to attend NDCDE is not right or fair. Parents should not have to cover these costs, and it should be the responsibility of the school district.

The cost of living is increasing, rent is increasing, food is increasing, etc. Now, we have to worry about our children receiving the best education possible because they wont be afforded the same ability to attend if parents cannot afford these courses. This isnt a private school. Private schools can charge an arm and a leg. What you are doing is saying that if you are middle class or below, your education doesnt matter. You are saying our children do not matter as much as those who can afford these courses. We are setting our children up for failure.

My children have had an amazing experience in NDCDE. The teachers are amazing, and I feel like the one-on-one time they get with their teacher means more than sitting in a classroom fighting for the time with their teacher. Teachers are more accessible through NDCDE. They also can learn at their own pace. If my child does not understand something, they are not rushed to a new unit. They can take their time to learn the material or ask questions. You do not get this in a brick-and-mortar setting.

My children attend NDCDE for various reasons. My 15-year-old has severe asthma. Being around perfumes and other smells is a trigger for him. He missed more school when he went on campus because he had to have constant treatment for his asthma. Since being home, this isnt an issue. Because his asthma is severe, getting sick is much worse for him than for someone else. He has a hard time breathing. Being home allows him to minimize his exposure to various illnesses. The other reason we do NDCDE is because we are afraid to be on campus. Our society sucks. The world we live in is not the same as it was 20+ years ago. Schools are supposed to be a safe place. They are not. There are so many threats weekly in our public schools. Our children should not have to fear going to school and parents should not have to worry constantly if a threat will become something more. Another reason, I can take my time in reviewing lessons with my children. They are not rushed to get through an assignment. They are not punished for a late assignment or criticized in the middle of class for not turning something in. They can reach out to their teacher, who responds quickly and takes time to review this with them.

My children have attended several virtual schools, but I have to say NDCDE has been the best. It has been a great experience from all levels. If we have issues, things are fixed quickly. If we have questions, we get answers quickly. We also have so many course options.

Please do not take this away from our children. Social anxiety and fear is a real thing. Sending these students back because they cannot afford the courses is not fair. You are setting these children up for failure and potential mental health issues in the future.

Thank you