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North Dakota Legislature
69th Assembly

RE: HB 1358

I'm writing in support of HB 1358 relating to the authorization of charter schools.

School choice and educational freedom are hot topics of our time. They reflect the desire of parents to choose something besides public school, private school or homeschooling. There are many reasons why parents seek something besides these three options such as individualized learning, creative teaching methods, alternative curriculum, smaller classes, more parental involvement, and something better suited for a child's unique needs and goals. Perhaps they can't afford private education or don't want the religious education most private schools include and maybe homeschooling isn't possible or desirable. What choice then, do these families have?

Charter schools are an answer for many of these families because they offer an experience similar to private school but are publicly funded. Charter schools include innovative curriculum and teaching methods, personalized learning, and put great value on parental involvement. Perhaps that is why charter schools outperform public schools as noted in the research by Fordham University.

Allowing charter schools in North Dakota would provide a much needed option in the school choice argument. In fact, it is a better option than educational savings accounts (ESAs) and vouchers because data shows charter schools produce better educational outcomes than ESAs (Quinnipac University) and reach a new demographic while the majority of those using ESAs are already enrolled in private schools (Forbes Magazine).

Ultimately, in school choice argument, charter schools provide another option which is what everyone wants. The competition to both private and public schools will only improve the educational outcomes in North Dakota across the board while not siphoning funds from local taxation meant for public schools.

North Dakota is one of only five states in the nation that does not offer charter schools. Let's close the gap and give North Dakota families another option in the education of their children.

Sincerely,
Kristy Rose