



Great Public Schools

Great Public Service

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**Testimony Before the House Education Committee  
HB 1358  
Tuesday, January 28, 2025**

Chair Heinert and members of the Committee, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. I rise here today in opposition to HB 1358 and urge a **do not pass** recommendation for this proposed legislation.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation for the bill's sponsor and co-sponsors and what they are trying to accomplish. Like them, we all want what's best for North Dakota's students, including those at risk of failing to graduate and those with special needs. So, our opposition is not with the goal, but rather with the means of achieving the goal.

Chair Heinert and members of the Committee, ND United is not convinced that the establishment of public charter schools in our state is the most cost effective or efficient way to increase the educational outcomes of our students. Our concerns include:

- **The cost of establishing charter schools.** What will be the long-term fiscal impact on existing public schools as money is diverted from them to charter schools?
- **Staffing.** The impact on public schools as charter schools compete with them to hire staff in areas like special education, mathematics, and other hard to fill positions.
- **The stability of charter schools.** Of all charter schools that have been active since 2000, 25% closed within six years of opening, usually due to inferior performance or financial mismanagement. What is Plan B if that happens in ND?
- **The lack of clarity as to the status of the teachers in charter schools.** Will they follow the negotiated agreement in place in the school district in which they are located? Will they be required to pay into the Teachers' Fund for Retirement?
- **The high rate of staff turnover.** Minnesota and many other states, who have years of experience with charter schools, have noted that teachers turn over at a significantly higher rate than those in traditional public schools.

- **Viability of charters in rural areas.** Will charter holders be required to serve rural areas or will they operate only in areas where they will generate revenue?
- **The necessity of charter schools in ND.** School leaders insist that they already have the authority to do everything in their public schools that charter schools can do if they have the resources to do so.

Mr. Chairman, ND United believes that rather than spending time and resources to stand up a second education system in North Dakota, it would be more feasible and less costly to provide our locally controlled public schools with the resources they need to accomplish their academic goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **do not pass** recommendation for HB 1358.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions.