

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee:

I'm writing in support of HB 1540 and school choice efforts in North Dakota.

My husband and I are homeowners in Minot. We have five children; four are school-age and enrolled full-time at Our Redeemer's Christian School. This is our fifth year sending our kids to private school, where they're able to receive a biblically based education—a choice that has been wonderful, both for our children and for our family. This choice comes at significant financial cost for our family, and we sacrifice to make it possible.

Every North Dakota family deserves the option of making this choice—without financial concerns preventing it—because education is not one-size-fits-all.

School choice has taken off in the United States in recent years, in the form of ESAs, voucher systems, and other bipartisan efforts in multiple states. It's time for North Dakota to join the movement and stop leaving our families behind.

State dollars currently only benefit the public school system—those dollars **should** be benefitting the students they represent. Let taxpayer money follow the students, at the discretion of their families. Granting families access to an ESA—whatever it ultimately looks like—supports the kind of freedom North Dakotans deserve and will only stand to improve the educational landscape in the state by creating more competition and diversified options.

President Trump has signaled he is strongly in favor of options like HB 1540 with his Executive Order last week—a move that should make funding a movement like this even easier for our state.

Two years ago, the Legislature passed a bipartisan school choice bill that was ultimately vetoed by the governor. He suggested the bill was not strong enough; it's time to go all-in on giving North Dakotans a solid school choice option we all can stand behind.

Opponents of school choice initiatives like to say “public dollars should not fund private schools”—and you'd be hard pressed to find anyone who disagrees. But HB 1540 (and its similar Senate counterpart, SB 2303) does not propose to do that at all. This bill makes possible a much more sensible argument: “public dollars should fund *North Dakota students*.” How parents determine that might best be achieved for their children is the kind of freedom North Dakotans deserve.

Please support school choice—and what's more, students and families—in North Dakota and mark HB 1540 as do-pass.

Respectfully,
Carolyn Moore
Minot, ND